

CASE

B









(very rare!)

\$1750

containing rare maps of  
early Russian territorial  
annexations, and rare  
portraits of Russian Emperors.





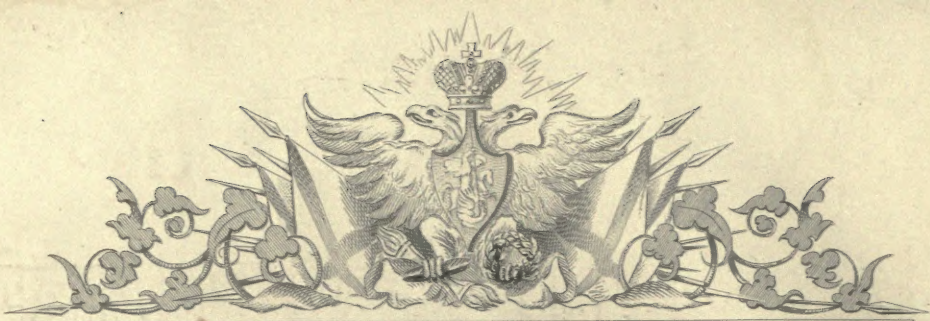






[illegible]





Drawn & Engraved by D.J. Pound.

ALEXANDER II.  
EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.






THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
RUSSIAN EMPIRE.



*English Dragoons attacking a Squadron of Tartars.*

On the landing of the Allies at Eupatoria.





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2008 with funding from  
Microsoft Corporation



HISTORY  
OF THE  
**RUSSIAN EMPIRE:**

FROM ITS FOUNDATION, BY RURIC THE PIRATE,

TO THE

ACCESSION OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER II.

BY HENRY TYRRELL, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE WAR WITH RUSSIA IN 1854 AND '55."

*Illustrated with beautiful Engravings on Steel.*

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY  
THE LONDON PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY (LIMITED),  
LONDON AND NEW YORK.

1857



DK40  
T9  
Case-C  
\*

RECEIVED  
PRESERVATION  
COPY ADDED  
ORIGINAL TO BE  
RETAINED

1935

TO THE  
LIBRARY







# RUSSIA IN EUROPE

SHOWING  
THE TERRITORIAL ACQUISITIONS SINCE THE TIME OF  
PETER THE GREAT.













## INTRODUCTION.

---

BEFORE commencing a narrative of the history of the gigantic empire of Russia, which comprehends nearly the half of both Europe and Asia within its dominions, it will be well to dwell briefly upon the *present* condition of that great political power. Let us state what Russia now is; and then proceed to inquire how it obtained its enormous territory, and its almost overwhelming influence in Europe. To the student, the politician, the merchant, and the philosopher, the subject is one of intense interest; while to the statesman the inquiry assumes the aspect of an imperious necessity. That such an empire should have arisen from the binding together of many barbarous tribes and semi-savage states, who were, for the most part, in a condition of perpetual antagonism, if not hostility, is one of the wonders of modern history. No power, save an unrestrained despotism, could, in the infancy of so vast and diversified a dominion, have saved it from dissolution. Nor are the constituent parts of the colossal dominion of the North merely bound together by military force, like the dependencies and limbs of the Austrian empire. What Russia acquires eventually becomes Russian; it resolves itself at length not merely into a constituent, but also an integral part of herself. She acquires fresh states as much by treaties as by wars; and has the wondrous art of imbuing her new subjects with a Russian nationality! Even Poland, with all its despairing bravery and prolonged resistance, is undergoing this change. Its patriotic exiles regard their conqueror with the profound bitterness of burning hate; but the masses—the clusters of human life which in Poland represent the people—are becoming satisfied with the change of rule that has passed over them: indifference, if not even contentment, is succeeding to a sense of inevitable submission.

Not one star which glitters distantly in the awe-inspiring immensity of the mysterious universe—not one vast forest which spreads over hundreds of miles of our earth—not one great empire which extends its sceptre over conquered or protected states, is an instantaneous or rapid creation. All great and powerful things are growths; which by gradual changes, development, accumulation, and absorption of other matters, have become what they are. This growth is a universal law, applicable alike to worlds, to states, to systems of government, reli-



gion, and morals, and to the progression of peoples. An acorn or an empire, a forest or a world, are equally governed by it. When, therefore, we would know how the great empire of the hardy North became the mighty representative of imperial military despotism on the part of its rulers, and of passive and reverential submission to authority on the part of its people; when we would learn how it acquired the profound and subtle principles of state-craft, and the military might which enables it to keep half the independent states of Europe in awe, and the rest in amazement, we must trace its growth. Behold, first, what it now is; and then follow out, step by step, how it became so. We shall find the career of Russia was a necessity—a great national destiny—proceeding, not in its details, but in the principle of its progress, according to inevitable and unalterable law. If similar circumstances existed elsewhere, similar results must necessarily follow. With a people possessed of hardy strength and persevering bravery, and a government combining a large amount of intellect, with an utter absence of moral principle, the aggressive policy of Russia was a natural and unavoidable result. Altogether inland, like a monstrous serpent coiled up within itself, it could not rest from extending its dominions by craft or conquest, until its borders reached the sea, and it could create a navy and find an outlet for its productions: nor will it yet rest until it has an entrance into that island-studded sea which forms the great highway of Europe.

The sceptre of the Emperor of Russia extends over the north-eastern part of Europe, over the whole of Northern Asia, and the north-western coast of North America. Yet the nucleus of this gigantic dominion was comparatively small; and these enormous possessions are the fruits of constant acquisition throughout centuries of warfare. No other sovereign in the world governs such an extent of country, or is acknowledged by so many different races of men. The inhabitants are chiefly of the Caucasian family; those of Mongol origin not forming one-hundredth part of the population. The people of Russia who belong to the Caucasian race, consist of Slavonians, Tshudes or Fins, Tartars, Germans, Jews, and Greeks. Nine-tenths of the population are of Slavonic origin, comprising Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, and Lettes, Wallachians, and Servians. The number of Russians constitute two-thirds of the whole population, and inhabit, to the exclusion of all other nations, the central provinces of the empire. They are divided into the Great and Little Russians; the latter chiefly inhabiting the country called the Ukraine. The Great Russians are mostly bondsmen to the rich nobles who exist amongst them. These are the common divisions of the Russian people; though they are sometimes also classed as White, Red, and Black Russians. White Russians are Polish Great Russians; Red Russian is chiefly Austrian; while the term Black Russia, always indefinite, is now obsolete. There is also a conventional division of the population into four



classes—the clergy, the nobility, the merchants and burghers, and the peasants. Most of the latter are the serfs of the crown, or of some landowner; only a very small number of them being free cultivators of the soil. So great is the variety of races comprised in the Russian population, and forming the base from which the power of that empire has its source, that Voltaire, in a pointed sentence, referred to Russia as “the new world created by Peter the Great.” At the time when the French wit, poet, historian, and philosopher dazzled the court of Prussia, and the voluptuous but gifted and magnificent Catherine swayed the sceptre of Russia, that empire was indeed a new world to the rest of Europe. It is new in its strangeness yet; especially to the people of England. The great struggle of 1854 and '55 drew the attention of our press and our tourists in that direction; and much information was brought forward concerning the government, policy, and people of Russia. It was natural, however, that Englishmen should regard the latter with a prejudice which stood in the way of correct impressions. As is usual with them, they were at first disposed to despise an enemy of whom they were almost ignorant. The Allies fought with Russia until they learnt to respect her on account of the military genius of her officers and the stolid bravery of her troops. They learned that she was an enemy worthy of their arms. Indeed, how else could she have excited their jealous apprehensions? Our prejudices, nay, our transient antipathy, was not only natural, but inevitable. We may now, however, gaze with more complacent feelings, and a more liberal and philosophic tone of thought, upon this “new world” of our continent. Men throughout Europe may be more or less refined, lively, or phlegmatic; lovers of freedom, or vassals of despotism; superstitious or enlightened: but they have still a great family resemblance. The “one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin” must prevail, more or less, between people who inhabit the same continent, and have, for the most part, the same religion and the same tastes for the beautiful in nature, the elegant in literature, and the gorgeous and voluptuous in art.

It was no light or unimportant task to fuse all the discordant ingredients, the many nations and tribes, to which we have alluded. Ages of warfare have been required to reduce the mighty chaos to order. Neither in the past nor the present does history present us with the records of an empire which, in extent, may be compared with that of Russia. Truly has it been said, that the superb monarchy of Alexander, the vast compass of the Roman republic, the fabulous progress of Arab conquest, are scarcely sufficient to give an idea of it. Where does Russia begin?—where will it end? are questions not unfrequently asked by the statesman and the philosopher. Such is its vast political influence, that it is difficult to answer the latter question. It is represented in every government of Europe; and in every cabinet of Europe is its influence felt. In many, nay in



most of the courts of Asiatic princes, its weight is apparent, and its power regarded with mysterious awe.

According to official statements made in 1846, the area and population of this colossal empire are as follows:—European Russia comprises 2,091,391 square miles, with a population of 60,604,702; Asiatic Russia, 4,735,185 square miles, with a population of 2,937,000; American Russia, 370,300 square miles, with a population of 61,000; while the Caucasian provinces extend over an area of 66,083 square miles, and contain a population of 2,648,000: forming a total of 7,262,959 square miles, with a population of 66,250,702. Baron Haxthausen, in his recent work upon Russia, states the population, in 1852, to amount to 69,660,146; of whom 50,000,000 belong to the Greek church; 7,000,000 (chiefly Poles) are Catholics, and about 3,000,000 are Protestants; the rest are Mohammedans, Buddhists, and the followers of obscure and vulgar idolatries. Gifted with an almost boundless territory, with enormous tracts of land yet unreclaimed from the primitive wilderness, with mines which yield prolific stores of wealth, what a power of expansion such a population must necessarily possess! What will that population be within a century? What, even in the year 1900? Evidently an enormous, perhaps irresistible, power for good or for evil. A solid foundation for European despotism, or a glorious aid to that rationally free and constitutional government which appears to be so safe and wise in action. Russia may abandon a policy which exhausts the energies of the people, in adding to its already overgrown dominions countries it cannot benefit by. Its present czar may strive to unlearn the ambitious lessons of Peter and of Catherine: directing his attention to promoting the prosperity of the vast empire he possesses, rather than to adding to it other lands which may prove a source of weakness instead of strength. Russia, with all her craft and crime, has yet been the pioneer of civilisation in the sterile and savage north: it is now time that she should rest in her dazzling and feverish progress, and, turning back her eyes on the lands and peoples she has subdued, devote herself to cultivating the one, and elevating the other. Her nobles and officers are among the most polished gentlemen of Europe; but her people are yet scarcely more than semi-Asiatic hordes, deeply plunged in barbarism and superstition, and almost as much an anomaly in Europe as the Turks. In political, as well as in social progress, it may be certainly pronounced that

“The bells of time are ringing changes fast.”

The present age is one of transition for Russia. She cannot continue into the future that which she was in the past. Nature cries aloud, in tones of commanding eloquence, to empires as well as to men—“Advance, or perish!” The statesmen of Russia are too wise to remain insensible to an injunction which is as



unalterable as destiny, as “unshunnable as death.” Should their successors be blind to the great problem which will stand before them for solution, the work of an empire’s progress and redemption will be done in other ways. Czardom is not necessarily eternal; and revolution may accomplish what the slow and silent progress of genial reforms could not effect. In spite of political statistics and ominous inferences, we have great hope for the future of Russia. The young giant is wilful and sullen, but we think he is growing wiser.

We shall here speak particularly of European Russia only; the Asiatic and American portions of that empire we shall briefly describe when we state how they were annexed to the dominant power. European Russia comprises the north-eastern portion of the continent most distinguished for power and for civilisation. The long range of the Ural Mountains and the river Ural divide it from Asia. From thence it is bounded by the waters of the Caspian, the snow-clad mountains of the Caucasus, and the rich and indurated shores of the Black Sea. On the west, Russia extends to the banks of the Danube, which forms the boundary between it and Turkey as far as the mouth of the river Pruth. The last-mentioned river divides Russia from Moldavia, nearly to its source in the Carpathian Mountains; while further north, between Austrian Galicia, Silesia, and Prussia, no natural boundary can be said to exist. On reaching the Baltic, the confines of the empire are marked by nature by the gulfs of Riga and Finland, and up to the northern extremity of the Gulf of Bothnia. Still further north, it touches Sweden and Norway. On the extreme north this gigantic empire is washed by the Arctic Ocean, which, at that point, forms the extensive gulf known as the White Sea.

Russia is, for the most part, one extensive plain; much of which is covered with bogs, and swamps, and forests; while in other districts there exist dry, woodless, and indeed desert tracts, called Steppes. In some places the swamps are from fifty to one hundred miles in width, though frequently interrupted by tracts of drier and more elevated land. Other portions are covered with interminable forests of pine and fir, and are nearly uninhabited. Some tracts of the soil of Russia are almost as sterile as the Great African Desert; while in others its fertility will bear comparison with the most favoured spots of nature. Bordering upon Archangel is the largest forest in Europe, if not on the entire globe: it is said to cover 150,000 square miles, and consists chiefly of different kinds of pine, mingled with fir, larch, and birch. Here and there occurs a cultivated spot, on which rye, barley, oats, peas, hemp, and flax are grown; but as the brief summer which prevails in this gloomy region is frequently interrupted with fogs and rain, the crops often fail. West of the river Onega lies the region of rocks and lakes which extends over the immense tract between the gulfs of Finland and of Bothnia on the west and south, and the White Sea on the north-



east. The land is level and very swampy, and though not devoid of fertility, requires great labour for its successful cultivation. The consequence is, that most of it is left in its natural state; and even within twenty miles of the extensive and gorgeous city of St. Petersburg (where, notwithstanding the trying severity of the climate, the refinements of magnificence and the delights of all that is rare and elegantly sensual in civilisation find a home), those forests commence which spread over nearly the whole of the country. They consist almost entirely of fir, pine, and birch; among which are dispersed immense boulders of granite. To an imaginative mind their vast and gloomy grandeur, and wild savage sublimity, may be regarded as a symbol of the empire itself.

The most important, and in many respects the most fertile, portion of the empire, is the basin of the great river Volga, which occupies about 650,000 square miles, and is equal in extent to three times the area of France. All connected with this interesting empire is on a scale of rude, uncultivated greatness. The lower course of the Volga traverses an immense steppe or desert, which stretches out eastward to the banks of the river Ural. This region, extending over about 336,000 square miles, is unfit for cultivation, and merely supplies a scanty pasture for the wandering tribes which inhabit it. Coarse tall grass grows in tufts several feet apart; a few wild plants, such as wormwood and salsola, are also found; but with the exception of these, the soil consists of a bare yellow clay, without vegetation. The Kirghiz steppe, east of the river Ural, has a similarly desert and forbidding aspect; and it is conjectured that the whole region, as far as the lake of Aral, was once covered by the waters of a now shrunken and diminished sea. The soil is still impregnated with salt; while saline plants and short wormwood are the vegetation most commonly met with.

The principal rivers of European Russia are the Volga, the Dwina, the Duna, the Niemen, the Neva, the Dnieper, the Dniester, the Danube, Don, Vistula, and the Ural. On account of the flatness of the country, they present a greater line of inland navigation than those of most other countries; though necessarily, all are not equally subservient to the interests of man in this respect. The Volga is navigable to its greatest length, extending as it does more than 2,000 miles over a course devoid of cataracts, rapids, or whirlpools. Lakes are numerous in some parts of the empire, especially in the north-west and south-east. Those of Ladoga and Onega are the most important; the former being the largest in all Europe.

The severity of the climate in Russia, though it has retarded the civilisation of its people, has yet braced them up to a vigorous manliness. Her prolonged winters, and her snowy deserts, have been the nurseries of a race hardened by privations and inured to suffering. Though her people may be apathetic, they spring to action at the call of their rulers. The North has ever been the cradle of



conquering races; and its dreary plains produce the simple man, neither contaminated nor unnerved by the enervating pleasures and vices of a higher civilisation. But the serfs and the serf-soldiers of Russia are debilitated by the crushing despotism of their government, apparently to a greater extent than they are strengthened by the bracing severity of their climate. Happily, the thinking citizen-soldiers of the West are fully a match for the ignorant, machine-like, hardy warriors of the North. Russia, with all her political wisdom and her military organisation, cannot make the serf the intelligent equal of the freeman.

With regard to climate, Russia is divided into what is termed the Arctic region, the cold region, and the temperate region. Russian Lapland, and the broad district of Archangel, are comprised within the first; over a considerable portion of which the mean annual temperature is below 32 degrees. Near the mouths of the rivers Pechora and Mezen the temperature is much lower, and, with the exception of a shrub a few inches high, vegetation is rarely met with. To the south of this locality lies the cold region, in which the mean annual temperature varies between 32 and 40 degrees. The southern limit of this region begins on the shores of the Baltic, on the Gulf of Riga, and runs thence east-south-east to the confluence of the Moskwa and Oka, whence it continues in the same direction towards the southern extremity of the Ural Mountains, terminating south of Uralsk, on the river Ural. In this latitude the winter lasts from seven to eight months in the northern districts, and from five to six in the southern. Spring and autumn are both short, and the transition from cold to heat is rapid; the latter is very great for two or three weeks during summer, the thermometer rising to 86 and even 90 degrees. Both heat and cold are greater in the interior than on the coast. The temperate region commences at the boundary just mentioned, and extends over the southern provinces. It is distinguished by severe though short winters, and by long and very hot summers. The mean annual temperature varies between 40 and 50 degrees; though in the Crimea, and the country adjacent to it, it rises occasionally to 56 degrees.

Russia exports a large amount of grain, and is regarded as one of the most important storehouses in Europe. Great crops of rye are produced in all parts of the empire, except the steppes and the Arctic region. Oats do not succeed so well, but wheat is extensively cultivated in the fertile tracts along the rivers in the southern districts. Flax and hemp are grown more largely than in any other country in Europe. Along the river Don, and even on the steppes of the Volga, they are found in a wild state. Tobacco is cultivated in the Ukraine; and in some parts of southern Russia, millet and maize are grown in large quantities. Fruit-trees are rare, except in the south; but in the most favoured portions of this district there are peaches, apricots, quinces, mulberries, and walnuts. The orchards of the Crimea also produce almonds and pomegranates.



Grapes also are found, but the wine produced from them is generally badly made, and of inferior quality. Hops and asparagus are found growing wild, and liquorice thrives luxuriantly on the banks of the Volga. Potatoes, cabbages, turnips, and carrots are grown abundantly; while melons, especially water-melons, are very numerous in the hot and dry countries near the steppes. The forests of Russia, gloomy and impenetrable as they seem, also constitute one of the principal sources of its wealth. Large quantities of timber, firewood, tar, pitch, pearlash, and potash are exported. Horses are numerous in Russia, but those in the north are of a small breed. The horses of the Cossacks, which pasture on the steppes, and are almost wild in their nature, are famous for their power of sustaining the greatest fatigue upon a very scanty allowance of food. Cattle are abundant; and although the home consumption of both tallow and hides is great, yet large quantities of both are exported. Sheep are even more numerous; and although the wool is mostly of an indifferent quality, the skins form the common dress of the peasantry during the winter. Goats are plentiful in Russia; hogs are largely reared (especially where oak forests are to be found); buffaloes are found at Astrakhan; while the nomadic tribes, which wander about the steppes, keep a great number of camels. In the extreme north reindeer are found. Where there is so much uncultivated land, wild animals necessarily exist. The bison roams in the forests of Bialoviza; while in those of the north are to be found elks, deer, hares, wild hogs, bears, gluttons, badgers, wolves, foxes, martens, polecats, weasels, ermines, otters, squirrels, and marmots. In the steppes, besides wolves and foxes, wild asses, saiga antelopes, konsaks, and the dipus jerboa, prowl and prey like nations—the stronger on the weaker. Fierce contests are waged where perhaps the foot of man never left its impress, and the jaws of the tyrants of the forest and the desert drip with the blood of the weak or the defenceless. Nearly all the birds met with in England are to be found in Russia, and the pelican is sometimes seen on the lonely and romantic-looking shores of the Caspian and the Euxine. Fish, though plentiful, are not largely exported, but isinglass and caviare are sent to foreign markets. In the steppes serpents and lizards are common, while the districts adjoining these sterile spots are occasionally infested by swarms of locusts. Wild bees are found near the large forests; and wax, though largely used in the churches, is exported. Scorpions, millipedes, tarantulas, and the scorpion spider are among the noxious insects to be found in Russia.

The mineral wealth of Russia is very great. Its European mines produce gold, platinum, copper, and iron; while from those of Siberia\* silver is obtained.

\* Siberia is wonderfully rich in metals and gems. It has three extensive mining districts. The first of these, in the neighbourhood of the Ural Mountains, yields gold, silver, and copper, together with smaller amounts of iron and platinum. The second, at Bernaul, yields much



The mines most extensively worked are in the government of Perm, which lies on both sides of the Ural Mountains. Here most of the inhabitants are employed in the mines, of which there are 200 of different kinds in operation; while 7,200 furnaces, and above 180,000 men, are engaged in different branches of metallurgy. Besides iron, copper, and platinum, they produce a little lead, gold, silver, salt, marble, jasper, agates, amethysts, loadstone, and some diamonds. The mines of the Ural Mountains yield annually about 300 poods (a pood is thirty-six pounds) of gold, 200,000 poods of copper, and 5,500,000 poods of iron. The neighbouring government of Viaka and Orenburg are also important mining districts. In addition to the metals we have enumerated, quicksilver, arsenic, nickel, cobalt, antimony, and bismuth are found. Marble and granite are quarried at the northern extremity of the Lake of Onega, and on the northern shores of Lake Ladoga.

Agriculture in Russia is in a rude and infantine state. But a comparatively small part of the land is cultivated, and that generally in a primitive and unscientific way. According to a native statist, the total annual produce of Russian cereals amounts to 186,875,000 imperial quarters; about 9,000,000 quarters of which, chiefly wheat, are exported. Hemp, flax, timber, hides, tallow, and wool, are the other chief articles of exportation. Although the government makes great efforts to encourage agriculture, still less than one-fifth of the surface is in corn-culture. Peter the Great, and his immediate predecessors, the czars Ivan the Great and the Terrible, were the founders of the manufactures of Russia, which they planted and fostered by means of inviting foreign artisans from Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy. Most of the necessities and elegancies of civilised life are manufactured in Russia. The Russian workman, though indolent, is ingenious, and imitates with great facility; but he is said to pay more attention to the appearance than to the quality and durability of his work. The internal commerce is carried on in a great measure by means of annual fairs. It is also greatly promoted by the extensive system of inland navigation which exists, and enables the inhabitants of the interior of the empire to send their goods to the White Sea, the Baltic, the Black Sea, and the Caspian. The chief trading ports are Riga, Cronstadt, and St. Petersburg, on the Baltic; Odessa, on the Black Sea; and Astrakhan, on the Caspian.

The Emperor of Russia is an absolute monarch, and may be regarded as

silver and copper, and some lead and gold. The third district is that of Nertshinsk, situated on the east of the Yablonoi Khrebet, in the basin of the river Amur. Here the mines contain gold, silver, iron, lead, zinc, antimony, and arsenic. Among the precious stones of Siberia, diamonds have been found along the eastern declivity of the Uralian range. The amethysts, topazes, emeralds, and red turmalines, are of great beauty. The mountains of Da-uria contain beryls, topazes, emeralds, and other stones of less value. The Baikal and Altaï mountains respectively contain lapis-lazuli and jasper, and porphyry of great beauty.



the most distinguished and powerful representative of the autocratic principle in Europe. The first Alexander was the originator and principal member<sup>1</sup> of the "Holy Alliance," which was established to bring about the utter suppression of revolutionary principles throughout Europe. The czar is regarded by his subjects with a superstitious reverence: in the estimation of the common people he is the "god of Russia;" his office and person being alike invested with a mysterious sanctity. They regard him as both priest and prince, for he is patriarch of the church as well as emperor of the state. The right divine of kings is not a threadbare fiction in Russia, but is maintained as a point of indispensable faith, especially among the masses. The people are taught that the authority of the emperor proceeds immediately from God. That *worship*, obedience, and fidelity are due to him from his subjects. In a catechism prepared under the direction of the emperor Nicholas, for the use of public and other schools, are the following questions and responses, which, though they jar strangely on an English ear, appear to excite no wonder or repugnance in the youthful mind of Russia, or in those who instruct and direct it:—"Question. What duties does religion teach us, the humble subjects of his majesty the Emperor of Russia, to practise towards him? *Answer*. Worship, obedience, fidelity, the payment of taxes, service, love, and prayer; the whole being comprised in the words worship and fidelity. *Ques*. Wherein does this worship consist, and how should it be manifested? *Ans*. By the most unqualified reverence in words, gestures, demeanour, thoughts, and actions. *Ques*. What kind of obedience do we owe him? *Ans*. An entire, passive, and unbounded obedience in every point of view. *Ques*. In what consists the fidelity we owe to the emperor? *Ans*. In executing his commands most rigorously, *without examination*; and in performing the duties he requires from us, and in doing everything willingly and without-murmuring." It will be observed, that in these words duties are enjoined to be paid to the emperor which, among civilised nations, are commonly regarded as being due to the Deity alone! The Asiatic principle of government peeps out here, and the Russian autocrat is presented to his people as a sort of Grand Lama. The actual government of Russia is modified by the tone of mind existing in surrounding countries; for no civilised state can altogether escape from the influence of the public opinion of Europe. Strange as it may seem, the free and powerful voice which proceeds from Printing-house-square is felt at St. Petersburg, and reaches Moscow. Russia smiles on every foreigner of parts or rank, and coquettes for the good opinion of the civilised world. A wise despot also may be, as Peter the Great was, a blessing to a state; but what is to prevent the rise of another demon of cruelty like Ivan the Terrible, or whimsical madman like Paul? Such fearful phases of despotism may be destroyed by revolution or assassination, but what is to temper them while they last?



Still, however, we repeat we are hopeful for Russia, for its government must bend and change with the progress of time. It is as yet in advance of the people, therefore it is strong; but when the period arrives (as in the natural course of events it will) when the people are in advance of the government, the latter must change or perish. As yet in Russia there exist but the rulers and the ruled; there is not a people in the sense in which that word is used in free states. Russia, however, is not China; and its masses are capable of both understanding and enjoying a rational freedom. Serfdom sometimes rocks uneasily beneath its yoke, and the government shows an apparently tender solicitude for the amelioration of the enslaved peasant. This is a necessary policy. Blindly reverential as the masses are to those in authority over them, yet they seem awakening to some sense of those feelings of a people's rights which obtain in most other countries of Europe. Serfdom, with whatever mildness it may be administered, is a galling institution, the nature of which is to elicit retribution at some period, and that perhaps not a distant one. A recent traveller in Russia (Mr. John Murphy) observes—"The whole atmosphere of the vast empire is laden with dread whispers of a mujik insurrection. Nobody knows whence they come, or who is the author; but they exist, and create fear and trembling in high places. Should such an insurrection, indeed, break out, God help the *noblesse*; nothing that we have ever yet read of—of *Jacquerie*, of French revolution, of St. Domingo, of Galicia—so near home, could compare for a moment with the scenes which a universal outbreak of long pent-up mujik vengeance would produce in the wide dominions of the czar."\* These poor people, so oppressed and feared, are yet capable of great cultivation. They are said to

\* We fear that, in too many instances, the poor serf-peasant has a painful amount of injuries rankling in his remembrance against his owner. Mr. Murphy, from whom we quoted above, says on this point:—"None but an eye-witness could realise the treatment to which the poor mujik is obliged to submit. On one occasion, a friend of mine whom I believe to be incapable of saying the thing that was not, visited a landed proprietor near Moscow, who, as boyards go, is by no means a bad master, but still he indulges in the luxury of the freeborn Yankee in rather an energetic manner. While he and my friend were sipping a glass of undeniable *Clicquot*—these boyards are princes in hospitality—a deputation of his peasants was ushered into the saloon to tell him of some misfortune that had happened to the village—a hen-roost blown down, or something of that sort. The head of the deputation was a venerable-looking old man, such as Rembrandt would have delighted to paint, and as he told his simple story and made his simple apology his appearance was quite patriarchal. But whatever was the misfortune, it so excited the ire of his master, a man in the prime of life, that he grasped the old man by the silver hair that flowed majestically down the side of his head, dashed him upon the ground, and commenced kicking him with ungovernable fury. Not one of the group, two sons amongst the rest, stirred a limb, and the poor victim himself only sought to kiss the foot whose mission seemed to be to kick his brains out. My friend being rather unaccustomed to this sort of thing, sprung from his much-beloved *Clicquot* and drew off the fury. The boyard submitted with a good grace—the Russian gentry are models of politeness—but seemed to think that the stranger's objection to his little escapade arose from that singular crotchety turn of mind that obtains for Englishmen the reputation of being a little 'cracked' all over the continent. He averred that a thrashing was



be gifted with a natural elegance, and a grace which makes everything which it touches or arranges take a picturesque attitude.

We have said that the regal power of Russia is absolute, and that in the strictest sense. To the masses the emperor is scarcely less than an incarnation of Deity. He is the fountain of authority and honour, and several classes of his subjects enjoy privileges and immunities under no other guarantee than the pleasure of the monarch, who may abolish them just as he granted them. The principal governing authority of Russia is the council of the empire, which is presided over by the emperor, or by some one especially appointed by him. It consists of four departments; legislative, military and naval, civil and ecclesiastical, and financial. Each of these departments has a secretary of state, and they deliberate either separately or together, in which latter case the meeting is called the general assembly of the council. In either case their decisions are submitted to the approbation of the emperor. The directing senate is the supreme tribunal for all judicial cases; but its authority also is subservient to the will of the monarch. The senate is divided into eight departments, of which the first superintends the general affairs of the country; the second, third, and fourth try civil cases; the fifth, criminal cases. These are all at St. Petersburg. the sixth, which also tries criminal cases, and the seventh and eighth, which try civil cases, sit at Moscow. One of the most mischievous effects in the Russian administration and police is the insufficient pay of magistrates, of whom the highest receives only £160 a-year. As a consequence, justice, or rather the perversion of it, is constantly sold; and bribery is the curse of the empire. The synod, or the "most holy directing synod," is the supreme administrative and the only thing a mujik understood, and that the most severe and harsh masters were universally the most beloved by their serfs. The Englishman quoted the proverb—

" 'A woman, a spaniel, a walnut tree,  
The more they're beaten the better they'll be,'

with which his host was hugely delighted, and, substituting the word 'mujik' for 'spaniel,' at once inserted the lines in his common-place book. But everything, even mujik endurance, has its limits. I was informed that shortly before my arrival in Russia, a dreadful tragedy had occurred at a village about a hundred miles south of the holy city. A young boyard, when starting on a journey, left a favourite greyhound in the safe keeping of a boy, one of his father's serfs. On his return he found his dog lame; and making inquiry, learned that the accident had occurred through some negligence on the part of the poor boy. Stung to fury by the misfortune of his much-prized dog, he summoned the luckless lad into his presence, and having reproached him for his crime, set his whole pack of dogs upon him, and let them tear him to pieces in the saloon. The boy's father, who had been cutting wood in a neighbouring forest, hearing the cries, rushed into the house, axe in hand, and on seeing the mangled and still quivering body of his son, at once forgot all his habits of abject servility, rushed upon the young tyrant, and clove his skull open with the axe. The poor man immediately delivered himself up to justice, but whether owing to the excitement which the offence had caused amongst the mujiks, or the extremity of his provocation, he was merely sent to a monastery to spend the remainder of his days in quietness and comfort."



judicial court for all ecclesiastical affairs; but its decisions are subject to the control of the emperor, as head of the church. The existing customs and ordinances of Russia were first collected into a code in 1497, by Ivan III. In 1550 it was revised and completed by order of Ivan the Terrible, under the name of Sudebnik, or judgment-book. The czar Alexis Michaelovich gave orders, in 1640, for the composition of a general code, which still remains the basis of Russian law. Since that period legislation has been continued by Ukases; that is, ordinances issued either in the name of the monarch himself, or the senate; the number of which, at the death of Alexander I., amounted to 30,920. The emperor Nicholas, on his accession, declared that a systematically arranged collection of the existing laws and ordinances should become the basis of legislation. A collection of all the laws and ordinances, from 1649 till the death of the emperor Alexander I., was published in forty-eight volumes. In 1832-'3, it was followed by a collection of those of Nicholas, from his accession to 1832; since which period it has been continued. From these collections was extracted the *Svod Zakonow*, or *corpus juris*, which now constitutes the general law of the empire.

It is not necessary here to speak of the capitals and chief towns of Russia; to endeavour to give word-pictures of St. Petersburg the magnificent; or Moscow, with its ancient aristocracy and cherished historical associations. Neither can we dwell upon the national and social characteristics of the people; for these will be developed as we proceed, and be best pictured in the deeds which history records concerning them. For the present, we shall be satisfied with quoting the following reflections on the Russian empire, from the eloquent and flowing pen of the historian Alison:—"Formidable as the power of Russia is, from the boundless extent of its territory, and the great and rapidly increasing number of its subjects, it is still more so from the military spirit and docile disposition by which they are distinguished. The prevailing passion of the nation is the love of conquest; and this ardent desire, which burns as fiercely in them as democratic ambition does in the free states of Western Europe, is the unseen spring which both retains them submissive under the standards of their chief, and impels their accumulated force in ceaseless advance over all the adjoining states. The energies of the people, great as the territory they inhabit, are never wasted in internal disputes; domestic grievances, how great soever, are overlooked in the thirst for foreign aggrandisement; in the conquest of the world the people hope to find a compensation, and more than a compensation, for all the evils of their internal administration. Revolutions of the most violent kind have frequently occurred in the palace; and the order of succession, as in all eastern dynasties, has been often turned aside by the bloody hand of the assassin; but no republican spirit has ever animated any considerable part of the population.



The troops who returned from Paris in 1815, brought with them a strong admiration for the institutions of Western Europe; and a large part of the officers who led the victorious armies of Alexander, were engaged for ten years afterwards in a dark conspiracy, which embittered the last days, and perhaps shortened the life of that great monarch, and certainly convulsed the army and the capital on the accession of his successor. But the nation were strangers to that political movement; the private soldiers who engaged in it were entirely ignorant alike of political rights, or the forms by which they are to be exercised;\* and the authority of the czar is still obeyed with undiminished oriental servility in every part of his vast dominions.

“If the belief in the ability of one Englishman to fight two Frenchmen is universally impressed upon the British peasantry, and has not a little contributed to the many fields of fame, both in ancient and modern times, where this result has really taken place, it is not less true that every Russian is inspired with the conviction, that his country is one day to conquer the world, and that the universal belief of this result is one of the chief causes of the rapid strides which Russia, of late years, has made towards its realisation. The passion for conquest, the thirst for aggrandisement, are among the strongest natural propensities of the human mind: they need neither the schoolmaster nor the press for their diffusion; they are felt even more strongly in the rudest than in the most advanced and civilised ages; and have, in almost every age, impelled the wave of conquest from the regions of poverty over those of opulence. The north is, in an especial manner, the seat of this devouring ambition, and the fountain from whence it floods mankind; for there are to be found at once the hardihood which despises danger, the penury which pants for riches, and the churlish soil which denies them but to the sword of conquest. The meanest peasant in Russia is impressed with the belief that his country is destined to subdue the world; the rudest nomad of the steppes pants for the period when a second Timour is to open the gates of Derbend, and let loose upon Southern Asia the long pent-up forces of its northern wilds. The fearful strife of 1812, the important conquests of 1813 and 1814, have added immensely to this natural disposition; the march through Germany, the capture of Paris, the overthrow of Napoleon, have spread, on grounds which can hardly be denied to be just, the idea of their invincibility; while the tales recounted by the veteran warriors of the deeds of their youth, the wines of Champagne, the fruits of Lyons, the women of Paris and Italy, have

\* “At the time of the conspiracy to put Constantine on the throne, in 1825, which Nicholas only stemmed by extraordinary courage and presence of mind, the cry of the party in the army who supported him was, ‘Constantine and the constitution.’ Some of the soldiers being asked what was meant by the ‘constitution,’ replied, they knew perfectly well. ‘It was the *new carriage* in which the emperor was to drive.’”



inspired universally that mingled thirst for national elevation and individual enjoyment, which constitute the principal elements in the lust of conquest.

“The institutions and government of Russia are calculated in an extraordinary manner to foster in all ranks this ambitious spirit, and turn it in a permanent manner to the purposes of national elevation. Though property is hereditary in its descent, and titles follow the same destination, *rank* is personal only, and depends entirely upon military grade or the emperor’s employment. Thus, a general of the emperor’s creation takes precedence of a prince or count by birth; and the highest noble, if he has not a commission in the army, finds himself without either a place or consideration in society. This curious combination of the European principle of the hereditary descent of honours, with the Asiatic maxim that all rank is personal only, and flows from the gift or office under the sovereign, leads, however, to hardly any of the embarrassments in practice which might, *à priori*, be expected; for as the necessity of military office for personal rank is everywhere known, and, from the warlike turn of the people, cordially acquiesced in, it is universally sought after, and no one thinks of aspiring to any place in society who is not either actually, or by the emperor’s gift, in the imperial army. The necessity of this real or fictitious military rank creates a multiplication of military honours and designations, which is not a little perplexing to foreigners; but it is admirably calculated to foster a warlike spirit in the people, and, by keeping alive the feeling that distinction is to be won only by military honours, to coin for the nation the reality of military success.

“In consequence of this universality of the military spirit, and all-prevailing sway of military ambition, the whole energies of the nation are, to an extent which appears almost incredible to one of the democratic states of Western Europe, absorbed in the profession of arms. From the emperor’s son to the peasant’s child, the career of ambition lies in the same channel; the same objects of desire inflame and animate the heart. In the first years of infancy, the mind of the young Cæsarowitch is warmed by the recital of the exploits of his father’s warriors; the long series of Russian victories is ever present to his mind; his earliest feeling of exultation, his proudest day in life, is when he is first arrayed in the mimic garb of the invincible grenadiers, who have carried the Muscovite standards in triumph to Paris, Erivan, and Adrianople. He grows up under the influence of the same feelings; the troops salute him, not with the title of emperor, but ‘father;’ and his familiar and uniform appellation to them is, not soldiers, but ‘children.’ The empire, in the opinion of the Muscovite peasant, is a vast family, of which the czar is the head; the chief interest of all its members is to enlarge the possessions and extend the glory of the domestic circle; and their first duty, to obey the imperial commands, and sacrifice themselves or their children, when required, to the imperial will.



“When such is the tone of mind which pervades the palace and the peasantry, it may be readily believed, that the spirit of all the intermediate classes, and, in effect, of the whole empire, is essentially military, and that their energies are almost exclusively devoted to warlike pursuits. In truth, this object entirely occupies their thoughts, and everything else is comparatively neglected. Commerce, though flourishing, is held in little estimation, and is for the most part engrossed by the merchants of the English factory. Agriculture, though not less than in the American states the main source of the national strength, is left to the boors, who prosecute it as their fathers did before them; and, in consequence, make little advance in improved methods of cultivation. Judicial or other civil employments, save diplomacy, are held in utter contempt: the whole youth of the empire who aspire to any station in society, are bred for the army. One hundred and eighty thousand young men, the flower of the empire, comprising 10,000 officers, among whom are found almost all its talent and energy, are constantly at the public seminaries, where military education is taught in the very best manner, and the whole knowledge communicated is of a kind to be available in warlike pursuits. Europe has much need to consider well how the pressure of 60,000,000 of men, doubling every half century, directed by the whole talent of the nation, educated at such seminaries, is to be averted; and those who believe that a pacific era is arising—that commercial interests are to rule the world, and one great deluge of democracy to overwhelm all other institutions, would do well to contemplate the spirit and institutions of this state, which now possesses an eighth part of the whole surface of the globe.”







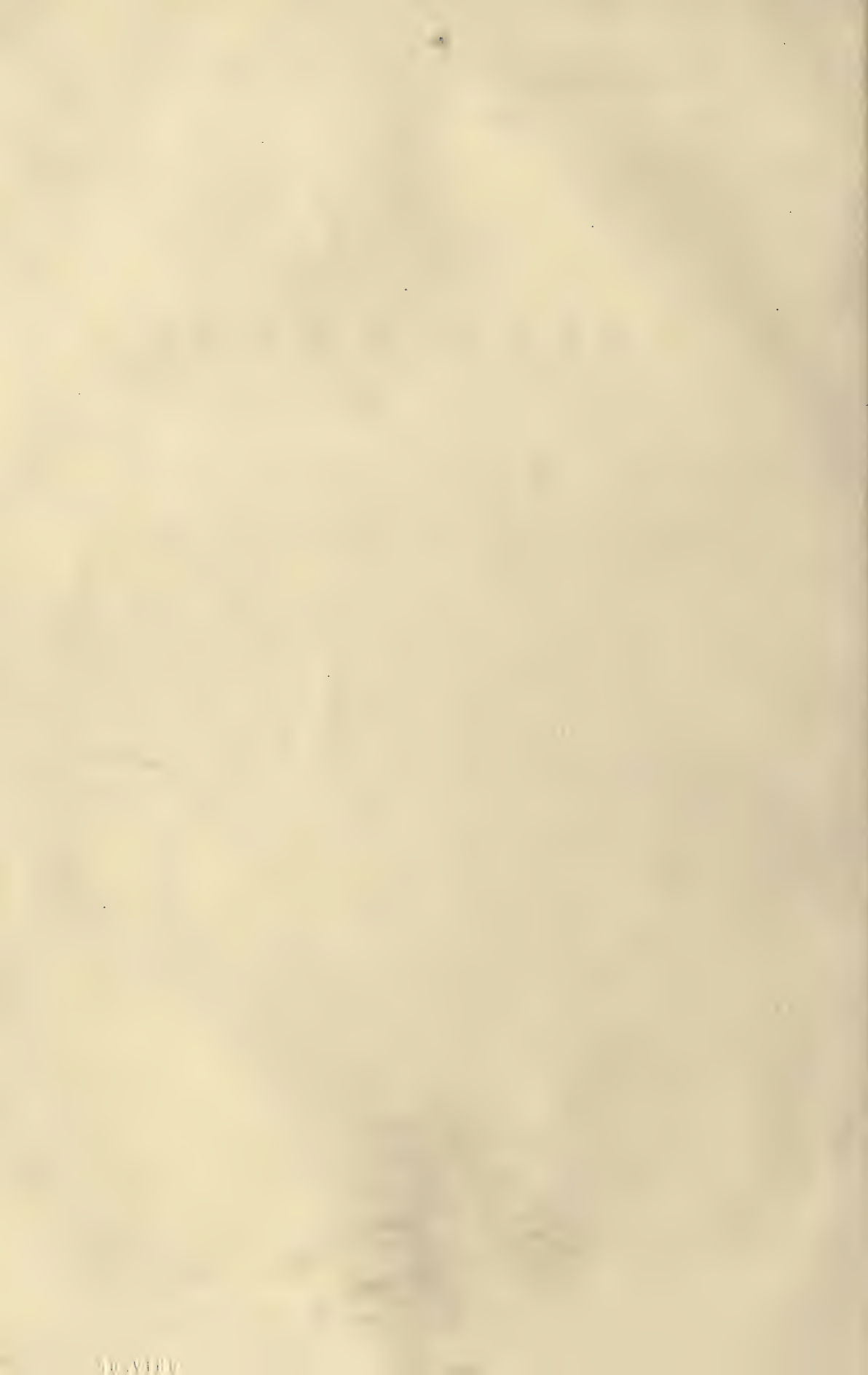


For continuation of Russia in Asia  
see Map of Independent Tartary.











# HISTORY

OF THE

# RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

THE ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF RUSSIA; KIEF AND NOVGOROD, THE NUCLEUS OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE; THE PIRATES OF THE BALTIC; RURIC'S CONQUEST, AND HIS ASSUMPTION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NOVGOROD.

"WHAT is history," said the emperor Napoleon, "but a fable agreed upon?" Though we are by no means inclined to admit of the extensive application of this aphoristic inquiry, which was doubtless intended; yet it is certainly true with regard to the remote records of most nations. The early chronicles of all European nations are clouded by the mists of antiquity, and distorted by the national vanity of those who have, perhaps, returned to the dust centuries ago. Rays of truth struggle faintly through clouds of suspicious traditions; and it is ever difficult to say where fable ends and actual history begins.

This is especially the case with the history of the Russian empire. Its early chroniclers were the monks, whom we are probably guilty of no injustice in describing as partial, credulous, careless, and ignorant of the importance of the labour they had undertaken. The jealousy of its despotic princes, also, led them rather to withhold information concerning the states they ruled; and although manuscript chronicles were deposited from age to age in the public libraries, yet permission to inspect them was rarely to be obtained. Unfortunately, also, these records are written in the ancient Slavonic dialect, which has become obsolete; and labour in this mine of information has rather bewildered than enlightened those who have attempted to profit by it. Under these circumstances, a modern historian observes, that "commentators sometimes grew bold, from the very want of materials, which made detection doubtful or impossible, and sometimes obscure, by leaving the enigmas of dates, names, and

events, as unsolved as they found them." Happily, the mystery of doubt hangs only over the early portion of Russian history: for the record of its marvellous progress and proceedings in modern times, we have generally ample materials. Necessarily, the vital interest of Russian history commences with the time when that state first took a prominent part in the great drama of European politics. Prior to that time, it has the interest of a wild romance of barbarous life; subsequently it possesses a more sober tone, but is yet crowded with startling adventure and gigantic events, and is pregnant with that wisdom which the observing mind gathers from the recital of the great actions, the vices, the errors, and the virtues of the past.

There are satisfactory reasons for the supposition, that the greatest part of the numerous tribes that inhabited Russia before the ninth century (about the middle of which its history may be said to commence), sprang from the Slavonic stock. The rest were composed chiefly of the Fins, who occupied the north, and the Scythes or Scythians, who dwelt in the south. Of the latter race very little is known; and a mist of doubt surrounds even the country from which they came. Some writers speak of them as sweeping into Europe from the savage wilds of Tartary; but various tracts, both in Asia and Europe, have been spoken of as the ancient Scythia—a country of which the exact site is unknown, and the inhabitants of which have been extinct as a people for ages. The antiquity of the Slave race in Europe is such, that no clue remains to show when they first settled in it.



Equally uncertain are the speculations as to whence they came. Asia is presumed to have been their cradle, though what portion of it, is unknown. It is probable that they were settled in Europe before Rome was founded, or the progress of nations placed upon record. Attempts have been made to trace their descent from Japhet, the third son of Noah; but the authors of such speculations are guided rather by idle imaginings than stern facts. The name Slave, or Slavi, is supposed to signify "glory" or "glorious," one which it was natural for a warlike and ambitious race to assume. Other antiquarians, however, consider it to be derived from the term Slovo, which means "word" or "speech." Either they had earned great fame by heroic achievements, of which no records remain; or their language was distinguished by its power or copiousness. In remote times they appear to have subjugated every country into which they pushed their arms; and the extent of dominion they acquired assumes proportions almost incredible. From the shores of the Adriatic (says an historian) to the coast of the Frozen Ocean, and from the shores of the Baltic, through the whole length of Europe and Asia, as far as America, and to the neighbourhood of Japan, we everywhere meet with Slavonian nations either ruling or ruled.

From the pages of a writer who appears to have spent much labour on this part of his subject,\* we extract the following account of a race which was, as we have said, for the most part the parent of the modern inhabitants of Russia:—"The character of this people was such as the uncertainty and peril of their habits were calculated to produce. They were courageous and reckless of life; cruel and rapacious; prompt to secure, by any means, the conquest that was necessary to their wants; but as their excursions were undertaken from meaner motives than aggrandisement or ambition (being chiefly to make provision for their immediate necessities, or to procure resources for a future supply), their intervals of repose were passed in supineness and indolence. They were hospitable to the excess of that virtue. It was a law amongst them, that a poor man might steal from his rich neighbour the means of entertaining his guest. The debasing usages of the East, respecting the treatment of females, they carried with them into the North.

\* Bell's *History of Russia*.

Women were considered as drudges and slaves. Polygamy was allowed; and the power of the husband asserted beyond the grave. Widows were consumed at the funeral pile; and, as if to complete the last show of household authority, a female slave was sacrificed on the body of her master. This custom arose from the notion, that women, wives, and slaves, were destined to serve their lords in the next world as well as in this, and they were accordingly put to death, in order that their lord should not be left in want of their attendance. It is probable that the *suttee* of the Indians may be traced to the same origin. All the male children of the Slavi were dedicated to war; but the curse of proscription awaited the females, even at their birth. Whenever it happened that the number of female infants in a family appeared to exceed the probable wants of the community, they were at once destroyed. These inhuman customs of the parents generated a corresponding inhumanity in their offspring. The old and feeble were deserted by their children, and left to expire of hunger and disease. These revolting practices were to be attributed to the unsettled and migratory habits of the people. Their mode of life required that they should always be prepared for action. They struck off the incumbrances of age and superabundant infancy, in order that their motions might be free to rove wherever their vagrant desires pointed. The same inordinate thirst after new scenes and strange adventures that enabled them to conquer those sacred associations which, under a different organisation of society, are universally revered, also enabled them to surmount the physical obstacles that constantly lay before them. We know that the Scythians removed their families from place to place in waggons, covered with hides, to protect them from the inclemency of the weather; but we have no means of ascertaining how the Slavi crossed seas and rivers, traversed vast deserts, penetrated untrodden forests, and made their way over trackless mountains.

"It was amongst such a people, who lived in a constant state of excitement, that poetry may be believed to have originated. The earliest Slavonian records describe them as practising the arts of music and poetry. In the sixth century, the Winide, a northern extended branch of the Slavi, informed the Emperor of Constantinople that their highest pleasures were derived



from music; that in their journeys they seldom encumbered themselves with arms, but always carried lutes and harps of their own workmanship. There were other musical instruments, too, which are still retained amongst their descendants. In their warlike expeditions they never appeared without music. Procopius informs us, that they were once so much engrossed by their amusements within sight of the enemy, as to have been surprised by a Greek general, before they could arrange any measures of defence. Many of the war odes and ballads of the Slavi are still in existence. They exhibit a wild and original spirit; are replete with mythological allusions; and those that are of a peaceful cast, are particularly remarkable for the quiet sweetness of their character, of a kind quite distinct from the elaborate and artificial felicity of the Greek and Roman pastorals.

"The religion of the Slavi resembled, in all essential respects, the mythology of the Romans, to which were superadded some features of a more superstitious and cruel nature. They offered up human victims to their Jupiter, who, built up with a trunk of hard wood, a head of silver, ears and mustachios of gold, and legs of iron, was called Perune. Like all other rudé nations of antiquity, they trembled before thunder, which they received as the voice of the god in anger. But their notions of a supreme deity were very vague; for, although they entertained some half-formed idea of the existence of a First Cause, they yet inconsistently attributed all events to chance. They personified the elements in a similar way. They had their sacred rivers and forests. They had their god of the waters, and attendant dryads and sea-nymphs: also a benevolent god, who presided over their games and festivals; a goddess of love and marriage; a pastoral divinity; and a goddess of the chase; nor did they omit some hieroglyphical Penates, whom the boors of Russia, to this day, scrawl in uncouth figures on the walls of their houses. The outline of the Slavonian mythology was not destitute of imaginative qualities. All the leading or chief deities had subordinate ones, to perform the functions identified with the elements or objects to which they were assigned. Their fauns, and satyrs, and forest spirits, and demons of fire, and of midnight dreams and pestilence, were all conceived distinctly enough, and helped out a sort of system that was well calculated to

act upon the fears of a superstitious race. There were innumerable idols, of various degrees of power, and all differing in particular attributes. The ceremonies by which these were propitiated were usually very costly, as were the temples in which they were performed, and the apparel of the priests who officiated. These ceremonies were generally closed by horrible immolations to the frenzy, or abandoned festivals to the honour, of the god. The mixture of the sanguinary and the ridiculous, of the poetical and the animal nature, of the elevated and the degraded, were visible throughout all their rites. Not a solitary want or enjoyment of mankind appears to have escaped the fertile invention of the Slavi, in the corresponding application of their image-worship. They had gods for all possible occasions, and gorgeous preliminaries to their invocation. But this kind of religion wanted unity. It was incomplete, both in its materials and its purpose. It made the savage more savage, and the timid more timid. To quail before the storm, or to dare it, were the only effects it produced. It never softened ferocity, nor inspired its believers with reverence for eternal wisdom. It was the rudest religion of external nature, and exacted servitude without love, or reason, or hope. In this, of course, the Slavonian superstition was not singular; but, perhaps, it was the most complicated and comprehensive that prevailed amongst the barbarous tribes that flourished in the age of the world in which it arose.

"The Slavi, in the original state in which we find them, admitted no particular form of authority in the government of their affairs. Their paramount doctrine of chance had much to do in settling the mode by which their domestic concerns were managed. The people at first met in large bodies in some of their temples or holy places. Gradually the national concerns fell into the hands of particular persons, who, according to their superior military talent, and the amount of individual esteem in which they were held, insensibly acquired the ascendancy. Out of this unconscious delegation, at last, sprung the hereditary tenure: fathers who had deserved well of their countrymen, bequeathed their honours to their children; that which was, in the beginning, but a personal distinction, ultimately became a permanent dignity; and finally, the formless chaos assumed a shape;



chiefs, and civil judges, and petty magistrates, springing up rapidly enough when once the lawlessness of the great body had been overcome. But the Slavi were slow to yield the right of election. They asserted, for a long time, the privilege of electing and deposing their rulers. The principal seats of power were, however, rendered hereditary by force; and the popular prerogative, thus extinguished by one decisive innovation, could never again be recalled. The manner of the election of a voyvode, or duke, in Carinthia, may be taken as a proof of the tenacity with which the people clung to their electoral privileges as long as they could. When the duke was elected, he was ordered to appear before his constituents, clothed in the poorest attire. A throne, formed of a huge stone, was placed in the centre, upon which was seated a common labourer. Before this organ of the multitude the new governor took the oaths of office, which bound him to respect truth and religion, and to support the friendless. This temporary magistrate then descended; the duke ascended; and the vows of fidelity were immediately subscribed by the people. Such was the simple, but impressive form, by which rulers, in the early stages of society, were pledged to the interests of their subjects."

The Slavonians in Europe suffered many vicissitudes. Overthrown in turn by other races of barbarians, they appear to have lost something of their original vigour and ferocity, or, at least, of their conquering power, and the close of the seventh century found them located chiefly in Russia and in Poland. In the former country they were cast away into a variety of widely separate settlements; and, as time rolled on, became known by distinct appellations. The aboriginal population of Russia was, however, swelled from other sources, and the Fins, the Tartars, and the Mongols, contributed to the roots of what, after a succession of wars and revolutions, was to become, perhaps, the mightiest, though rudest, state of modern Europe.

These various tribes were known by the common name of Russians, prior to the time of Ruric, the founder of the first dynasty of the present empire; and many conjectures have been formed as to the origin of this term. One is, that the name was derived from a tribe called Rhoxolani or Rhoxani, and thence corrupted into Russian; another, that a prince called Russus

gave his name to the people. It has been attempted to be shown, that the followers of Ruric, the northern pirate (of whom we shall speak presently), called themselves Russians, and transferred the name to a state which they had a large share in founding. Again, it has been somewhat fancifully conjectured, that the nymphs or goddesses called Russalki (with which the vivid Slavonian imagination, fertile as that of the ancient Greeks, peopled the waters and the forests), might have had their names assumed by their devotees, as a token of regard and veneration. M. Levesque, in his interesting essay on the religion of the Slaves, observes—"The Russalki were nymphs, the subordinate goddesses of waters and forests. They possessed all the graces of youth, enhanced by the charms of beauty. They were frequently seen sporting on the banks of rivers and lakes; sometimes bathing in the limpid streams, or swimming on the surface; and in this exercise, some of their charms were only concealed from the prying view for the sake of presenting more enchanting attractions; to attitudes full of grace succeeded movements still more voluptuous. Sometimes they were seen on the margin of the waters, combing their fine long azure locks; at others swinging, now with a rapid motion, now with a gentle vibration, on the flexible branches of the trees. Their light drapery, flowing to the sport of the winds, in its varied undulations alternately concealed and displayed the treasures of beauty. Sacrifices were made to these amiable beings."

We have said that the nucleus of the Russian dominions was comparatively small. The first Slavonian state was established on the banks of the Dnieper (the ancient Borysthenes),\* and possessed a chief city called Kief, from Kivi; a Sarmatian word, signifying mountain. The capital of the Slavi who had settled in the north, on the river Volkhof, was called Novgorod or New Town, and stood a hundred miles from the site of the present city of St. Petersburg. Its early annals, like those of Kief, are involved in obscurity. It is, however, sufficient that we are enabled to arrive at the conclusion, that the kingdoms or settlements of which these cities were the capitals, constituted the germ of the future

\* The name Borysthenes signifies a rampart formed by a forest of pines. It is derived from the word *bor*, a forest of pines, and *stena*, a wall. The banks of the Dnieper are still in many parts bordered with dense pine forests.



empire of Russia. So powerful were the resources of Novgorod, and so great its distinction above rival states, that it gave rise to a proverbial expression of remarkable arrogance and audacity. "Who," said its inhabitants and their dependents, "shall dare to oppose the gods and great Novgorod!" It extended its commercial intercourse to Persia, and even to India, in one direction, and to the settlers on both shores of the Baltic in another. Its government was a republic, and its people were bold and hardy. Its prosperity, however, excited the jealousy of its neighbours; dissensions arose within its walls, and the famous city was at length torn by distractions from within, and surrounded by enemies without.

At this period the waters of the Baltic were haunted by Scandinavian pirates, who necessarily were a great impediment to the commerce of the people of Novgorod, which their depredations threatened altogether to annihilate in that direction. The Northmen, inhabiting that large peninsula anciently known as Scandinavia, but now comprising Norway and Sweden, and located chiefly in the vicinity of rivers, friths, and bays, where the climate was severe and the soil unproductive, became pirates, just as the wandering Arabs of the desert became robbers—from a stern necessity. In barbarous times, when agriculture was little understood, and even when practised rendered comparatively unproductive by the barrenness of the soil and the severity of the elements, it may be supposed that many seasons of famine occurred. These drove the hardy Scandinavians, who were no strangers to the sea (which they loved to brave in its fiercest moods), to seek from its waters by fishing, that sustenance which the hardened land, irresponsive to their rude efforts, appeared to deny them. Once upon the sea, the conversion of these fierce people from fishermen into pirates was a very rapid one. It was easier to take a vessel laden with fish, than to discharge the patient labour of catching fish for themselves. Piracy, from an accident, became a vocation; and, by degrees, vessels were equipped for that purpose alone: then the villages on the coast were plundered; and any trading vessel that was unfortunate

enough to come in the way of the rovers, made a prize. The inevitable dangers attending such a profession did not damp the spirit of adventure. Courage was a part of the religion of the Northman; and if he died fighting against his fellow-men, and with his weapons stained with the blood of his adversaries, his superstition induced him to believe that he entered at once on the enjoyments of the halls of Odin—the Scandinavian paradise of the brave.

The dominant tribe of these Baltic pirates were the Varangians;\* and the citizens of Novgorod, oppressed and enfeebled by the attacks of many enemies, made overtures to them for assistance. The hardy Northmen, ever ready for war, and as mercenary as they were fierce and brave, sold their services to the wealthy traders of Novgorod. Thus reinforced, the latter were enabled effectually to subdue their surrounding enemies. Tranquillity was restored, the mercenaries rewarded for their assistance, and it was then expected that they would return to their ships and their former occupations. Like many other reasonable expectations, however, this was not fulfilled. The pirates were pleased with the locality of their recent exploits, while a sense of power made them ambitious. They had no desire to depart. They felt also that a wealthy body owed its safety to their arms, and that they could not be too largely rewarded for their services. The feeling was natural, and the consequences resulting from it immense. A resolve to settle on the banks of the Volkhof was soon formed; and under the direction of Ruric, their leader, a town was built, and called Ladoga. To secure themselves in this position, the intruders surrounded it with a rampart of earth. Ruric also established his brothers, Sinaus and Truvor, in a similar manner; and the alarmed Novgorodians saw that, in inviting assistance, they had created a fresh enemy. They repented of the confidence they had shown, but it was too late; the new-comers had seen their weakness, and were resolved to hold by force what they had acquired by stratagem.

Enfeebled as the Novgorodians were by dissensions and long-continued conflicts, they yet resolved to expel their uncere- monious invaders by force of arms. Such a

\* The term Varangian seems rather to indicate a profession than a tribe. It was synonymous with a pirate; but an old author says, that there were Swedish, Norman, English, and Russian Varangians.

General Count Segur, in his *History of Russia*, observes, that everything leads us to believe that these Russian Varangians were Normans. Perhaps they were a confederation of outcasts of the Baltic shores.



step was doubtless expected by the Varangians, who, fearless and desperate, at once turned their swords against those whom they had so recently succoured. A conflict took place, in which the republican traders were defeated, their leader slain, and themselves thrown into confusion. Ruric and his fierce associates followed up their advantage, and advanced upon Novgorod; for an ambitious project had arisen in the mind of the Scandinavian pirate;—might not this fine and well-reputed city become in his hand the nucleus of a kingdom, and he the founder of a regal dynasty? It was a brilliant day-dream, which his courage and

energy enabled him to convert into a reality. When he and his ruthless bands appeared before Novgorod, the inhabitants were thrown into despair. Demoralised by recent defeat—without leaders, and without hope—they anticipated the result of a siege, and submitted. Ruric entered the city a conqueror; and assuming the reins of government, converted the trading republic into an absolute monarchy.\* Thus, in the year 862, was laid the foundation-stone of the Russian empire. Little, however, did Ruric dream of the mighty work he was beginning; or of the vicissitudes to which his descendants would be subject.

## CHAPTER II.

REIGN AND DEATH OF RURIC; THE REGENT OLEG; HE SUBDUES KIEF AND INVADES CONSTANTINOPLE; HE IS SUCCEEDED BY IGOR; HIS FEROCIOUS EXPEDITION TOWARDS CONSTANTINOPLE, AND RETALIATIVE VENGEANCE OF THE GREEKS; HIS SECOND INVASION OF GREECE; HIS OPPRESSION OF THE DREVLANS, AND ASSASSINATION.

THE people of Novgorod, tired of a form of government where individual ambition had latterly pushed the forms of democracy to the verge of anarchy, submitted passively to the new mode of rule forced upon them, in the hope that it would be better than the late one. Ruric assumed the title of Grand Prince, which, as it recognised other princes subordinate to himself, was calculated to satisfy the ambition of his own immediate chieftains, and also to soothe the national feelings of the people who had submitted to his sway: since by such an arrangement minor princes might still arise from amongst them. Ruric's government was of a military character; and the Varangians regarding themselves as conquerors, and having swords in their hands, naturally seized upon all posts of honour or profit. From this period the country, under the sway of Ruric, took the general name of Russia. That which the new sovereign had acquired by force, he preserved with firmness, and governed with some wisdom. He

gave laws to the people, enlarged the boundaries of the city, and endeavoured to restore its former prosperity and reputation. Having established his authority, he returned to Ladoga, which he made the chief seat of the infant empire.

Ruric, in his capacity as grand prince, claimed the right of granting separate principalities to his two brothers, who in return were to do him homage, and to be held as his vassals. By a decision of Ruric's, or perhaps in consequence of a custom existing among the Varangians, the right to grant was accompanied by the right to resume, and also to remove the subordinate ruler from principality to principality. At the same time, any of these subordinate princes who were left undisturbed in their possessions at the death of the grand prince, acquired in consequence an hereditary title and power. The result was extremely injurious to the consolidation of the empire contemplated by Ruric. In course of time these princes became small independent

\* An ancient chronicle, to which no authority is attached, represents the Novgorodians as soliciting the powerful Ruric and his brothers to assume a sovereign power over them. The principal citizens are reported to have sought an interview with the Varangian princes, and observed, "Our country is large

and fruitful, but it is without order; come and govern it according to our laws." It is added, that Ruric hesitated, for he knew the licentiousness of the people, but that he eventually complied with their desires. Perhaps a few citizens were bribed or intimidated into this surrender of their independence.



sovereigns, and instead of one powerful, united state, there existed many feeble, jealous, and even antagonistic principalities. The curse of division was to affect the new state, but not yet. Sinaus and Truvor, the brothers of Ruric, who had been appointed to the government of chief towns in dependent territories, both died childless before the demise of the head of their family, who, as if conscious of the error he had made, then reunited their territories to his own.

Ruric, doubtless, was a man of superior talents, and of a firm and resolute character. He appears not only to have been respected by his subjects, but to have been looked up to with admiration by the inhabitants of surrounding territories. He had not swayed his iron sceptre for any length of time before another city appealed to him for assistance against its enemies. The inhabitants of Kiev, the other Slavonian city we have mentioned as standing on the banks of the Dnieper, appealed to him for protection against the Khazares, and desired him to appoint a prince of his own blood to be their ruler. This was an opportunity for the extension of his rule, which he was far too active a man to neglect. Conferring the new sovereignty on his step-son, Oskold, he sent him at the head of a considerable force on the mission of aid and annexation. Oskold's sword was not drawn in vain; he defeated the Khazares, and assumed the sovereignty of Kiev, which thus became subordinate to the growing power at Novgorod. Dir, a Scandinavian warrior, was united with him in the government.

Ruric reigned in peace during a period of seventeen years, and died in 879. His iron determination awed his fierce dependents into tranquillity, and the firmness of his rule restored to the state that security without which commerce must ever decline until it hovers on the verge of dissolution. His only son, Igor, was but a child; and although the right of the infant prince to the throne was acknowledged, the affairs of the government were placed in the hands of Oleg, his guardian and relative, until the young prince was of an age to administer them himself.

Oleg, though possessed of many of those qualities which are commonly found in the characters of successful rulers, was cunning, unprincipled, and savage. Count Segur, the historian, himself a soldier, estimates this barbarian as a great man; a circum-

stance which, he truly remarks, is sufficient to account for the most remarkable events. "Oleg," he says, "seems to have possessed in a high degree the qualifications, the vices, and all the passions most suitable to the age in which he lived. A true specimen of barbaric greatness: brave, crafty, insatiable, adventurous, indefatigable; faithful, as with respect to Igor, his ward, yet with others occasionally treacherous." To such a man it was not sufficient that he should rule the dominions committed to him in peace and wisdom. He desired the excitement arising from war, and from unjustly despoiling his neighbours of their possessions. The habits of the pirate were not forgotten in the dignity of the ruler, and he remembered with pleasure the savage exploits of earlier days. Similar feelings dwelt in the minds of the Varangians. Their love of the sea and of daring adventures was not extinguished; and a citizen's life was doubtless irksome to these wild spirits. Even the warlike and ambitious feelings of the Novgorodians were again awakened; and a desire for war animated the whole people. No enemy required chastisement—no necessity existing for taking up arms in self-defence; but war was wanted merely for the excitement of the pursuit and the love of plunder. Oleg was the very man to respond to such a feeling; and he speedily planned a campaign that promised employment for the idle, and reward for the discontented. That it was wickedly aggressive and unjust was a matter totally disregarded by his followers. Semi-barbarians never seem to look at events from that point of view. To the state of mind apparently inseparable from such a stage of existence, that which promises success is to be undertaken—that which proves successful is deemed right.

The city of Kiev owned the supremacy of the grand prince of Novgorod; while Oskold and Dir, its rulers, had been followers of Ruric, and appointed by him to the authority they held. Yet against Kiev did Oleg resolve to direct his arms; and trampling upon the rights of the subordinate princes, annex it to the dominions he governed as regent. Such was his ambition, that he even looked upon Kiev only as a step forward in the direction of the gorgeous and wealthy city of Constantinople, then the seat of the Greek emperor, and the capital of the great empire of the East. In such a direction conquest was perhaps not



dreamed of; but a sudden attack upon the rich city promised great opportunities for plunder. Oleg soon collected a numerous army, consisting certainly of discordant materials; for it was composed of fragments of tribes of different languages, costumes, and habits, but all animated by one feeling—a love of violence and plunder. Taking with him the young prince Igor, he directed his march towards Kief, capturing Smolensk, the capital of the Krivitches, in his way, and spreading terror among the inhabitants of the small towns and villages through which he and his army of marauders passed.

Oleg did not rely for success on force alone, but had recourse to cunning and treachery. On approaching Kief he hid his troops in the neighbourhood of the river Borysthenes, or Dnieper, and disguising himself as a merchant of Novgorod, proceeded up the river with a few followers only to the gates of the city. He had previously sent a messenger to the two princes, to request permission to travel through their territory into Greece. The messenger added, that illness prevented his master from attending to pay his respects to them in person, and begged that they would come and honour him with an interview. Oskold and Dir, not suspecting villany, and desirous of paying respect to a powerful merchant of Novgorod, consented, and shortly arrived at the river's bank, attended only by a very few followers. When they appeared, the soldiers of Oleg sprung from their vessel, and the ruffian chief holding aloft the young Igor in his arms, shouted, "You are neither princes, nor sprung from princes; but I am a prince; and, behold, here is the son of Ruric!" The ferocious soldiers, who had doubtless been instructed in the part they were to take in this repulsive tragedy, rushed upon the unarmed chiefs, and laid them dead upon the spot. While the bodies of the victims were distorted with the convulsions of dying agony, and their blood yet dripped from the swords of the murderers, Oleg shouted exultingly, "Let Kief be the mother of all the Russian cities!" An observation which revealed the extensive schemes of territorial extension his ambitious nature had engendered.

The inhabitants of Kief, struck with amazement, and unprepared for defence, opened their gates to the regent of Novgorod; and the two Slavonian states were soon united under one government. Oleg

transferred the seat of his government to the city he had so unjustly obtained, and fixed his residence there. His object in doing so, was chiefly that he might be nearer to Constantinople, with the promised spoils of which he bought the mercenary loyalty of his wild followers. His energy raised new towns in the vicinity of Kief, and subdued or won over all the neighbouring tribes who had previously been under subjection to the feeble khans of the eastern Khazars. He was a man wise in his generation, and eminently fitted to rule the diverse tribes of barbarians whom fear or interest induced to acknowledge his authority. In their estimation, a just man would have appeared an insipid character, and a merciful one, an imbecile. The savage nature of Oleg won their respect, while his subtlety attracted their attachment. He wisely relaxed the severity of the laws within the neighbourhood of the city where he resided, and reduced the amount of tribute money.

He pursued his cherished design of the invasion of Constantinople with remarkable tenacity. The vanquished tribes flocked readily to his standard; for they were all animated by a greedy desire of gain, and a thirst for the excitement of war and its unbridled gratifications. In those barbarous times, an army rather resembled an aggregate of bands of robbers, each individual of which followed his own lawless and savage desires, than the rigidly disciplined and machine-like masses of life which modern military art has found to be most efficient. Oleg collected an army said to amount to 80,000 men, whom he embarked on board 2,000 of the primitive vessels which the rude constructive skill of his artisans enabled them to build. Leaving Igor to rule at Kief during his absence, the robber-warrior and his hordes sailed down the waters of the Borysthenes, or Dnieper, in their progress to the Black Sea. Elated with excitement, and mad with the thirst for spoil and blood, they met and overcame obstacles which appear almost insurmountable even in these days of science, when so many of the forces of nature are rendered subservient to the designs of man. For a considerable distance the navigation of the river was impeded by cataracts, where its waters fell in foam and spray over seven rocks. Barbarian energy was equal to this emergency. Unloading their small vessels, the followers of Oleg dragged them by sheer strength over



the rocks; an enterprise attended by herculean labour, and great risk of life. Other difficulties also lay in their path. On the banks of the river dwelt hostile tribes adverse to the advance of the marauders, who had frequently to fight their way onward, and leave behind them many ghastly evidences of their destructive trail. At length they emerged into the waters of the Euxine, or Black Sea; and then their vessels entered the Bosphorus, and took up a position near the walls of the queen of cities, and the seat of the power and magnificence of the East.

The inhabitants of Constantinople were almost taken by surprise at this formidable visitation. The emperor Leo, surnamed "the philosopher," though without much justice, as he employed his time rather in speculating on abstruse theological questions than in attending to his duties as a sovereign, had made no other defensive preparations than that of ordering a heavy iron chain to be slung across the harbour, for the purpose of preventing ships from entering it. This obstacle Oleg is said to have overcome by a laborious scheme, which in its singularity has an air of incredibility to modern ears. Unable to break or pass the chain, he ordered his 2,000 vessels to be drawn up on land. Then placing their flat-bottoms on wheels, he caused all sails to be spread, and actually proceeded in his ships on land up to the gates of the city. As they passed along, his ruffian troops committed every sort of atrocity. They massacred the inhabitants in mere wantonness, and left their habitations in flames. They even appeared to be actuated by a frenzy of cruelty; and not content with putting their victims to death, subjected them to every torture and indignity which a brutal nature could suggest. These atrocities produced the intended effect. Oleg and his ruffian troops created such terror, that on their arrival at Constantinople, it submitted; and the invader having proudly hung his shield over the gate as a symbol of conquest, entered the city in triumph. Thus the lance of this warrior, "cut from the forests of Lagoda, penetrated the gates of Byzantium."

The emperor Leo attempted to accomplish by artifice what he had been unable to effect by force. Inviting Oleg to a feast, he endeavoured to remove him by poison. The plot failed, and the baffled emperor was compelled to purchase the retirement

of his enemies by a disgraceful peace. He bound himself to pay a large tribute to every vessel sailing under the flag of Oleg; or, according to other accounts, to give a considerable gratuity to each of his followers. In addition to this, he was to remit all duties upon Russian merchants trading in the Greek empire, to support them for half a year, and to furnish them on their departure with means to prosecute their journey homewards. Such terms form a painful comment on the insolence of the aggressor, and the helplessness and humility of his victims. The treaty being ratified, Oleg and his barbarians returned in triumph to Kief, laden with plunder and trophies. The people, astonished at the ease with which he had accomplished so great a victory, received him on his return with an enthusiasm approaching to veneration. Their superstitious minds at once yielded to the spreading belief, that a chieftain who conquered so readily must be a favourite of the gods.

For some years the victor seems to have rested contented with the blood-stained laurels he had acquired. During this period the Greeks observed the galling treaty to which they had bound themselves; and the Russians enjoyed all the advantages arising from it. Oleg then exhibited a fresh instance of his power, by extorting the acquiescence of the emperor Leo to a fresh treaty, embodying several stipulations which, he said, he had omitted on the former occasion by inadvertence. These conditions, relating chiefly to the terms on which intercourse should be conducted between the two nations, were moderate, and might have been regarded as inoffensive, but that they were so couched, as to imply indirectly the supremacy of the Russian sovereignty in all matters over that of Greece. Oleg governed nominally as regent, but he was in reality an actual sovereign during the whole of his life. Such a man was too powerful to be displaced from an authority it did not please him to resign; and Igor passively consented to wear a shadowy crown, while the real one encircled the brows of his relative. Resistance would have endangered his safety, and probably have led to his death. He did wisely in leaving the real power in the hands of Oleg, whose iron despotism and fierce energy cemented and enlarged the infant state laid by the pirate Ruric. Oleg ruled for three-and-thirty years, and died in 913. The ancient chro-



nicle of Nestor contains an account of the mode of his death, which, however, has all the air of a fable, and has been applied to other characters in more modern times. According to this narrative, he possessed a favourite horse which he had ceased to use, as the diviners had foretold it would be the cause of his death. After a lapse of five years something reminded him of the prediction, and inquiring for the horse, he was informed that it was dead. With a natural feeling of exultation, in consequence of the presumed failure of the prophecy, he desired to see the body of the animal. On being conducted to it, he placed his foot upon the skull, and exclaimed, "So, this is my dreaded enemy!" No sooner were the words uttered than a serpent, which had lain concealed in the cavity of the head, darted out and inflicted a mortal wound on the foot of the sovereign, whose death in consequence verified the truth of the prediction. The world has outlived a belief in diviners and secular prophets, and will doubtless accept this tradition for no more than it is worth. The wild fancies of romance have ever a tendency to intrude themselves into the early history of nations.

Igor I., the son of Ruric, now ascended the throne, which had long been his by inheritance, though not in fact. Arrived at the mature age of forty, he had been for some time married to a Slavonian lady of great personal attractions; a union wisely intended to promote the gradual fusion of the two races. As might be expected in so young and unsettled a state, a new rule was not commenced without some disturbances. The recently subdued tribes evinced symptoms of insubordination, and resisted payment of the tributes imposed upon them. Igor enforced his authority with some energy, and succeeded in reducing to submission those who dared to oppose his authority. One tribe, occupying the southern branch of the Dnieper, prolonged its opposition during a period of three years; but was then subdued by the gallantry of one of his chieftains. Events of this kind, however, brought neither distinction to the prince, or plunder to his followers. Their military ardour was excited by the riches of the capital of the eastern empire, where wealth abounded, and commerce and arts flourished. It was but a small and unproductive triumph to reduce tributary nations, composed of poor tribes, living by their cattle and rude methods of agriculture.

Igor also had made an inglorious peace with the Petchenegans, a fierce people who had descended on Russia from their lairs on the Yaik and the Volga; and his subjects chafed under the indignity. Grown used to conquest, and feeling the necessity of the excitement produced by war, they felt no regard for a sovereign who did not seek to extend his rule by conquest, and impress surrounding countries with the terror of his arms, while he converted them into fields of spoil for his followers. Igor seems to have felt this; and in an unhappy moment he resolved to imitate the aggressive career of Oleg, by again directing the arms of Russia against the Grecian empire.

A considerable period must have been occupied in preparing for this wanton and uncalled-for war, which was undertaken with no other object than that of plunder. It was not until the year 941 that Igor had completed his arrangements. These were of a gigantic nature. It is said that he had collected an army of 400,000 troops on board 10,000 barks. This is doubtless a great exaggeration; for it seems incredible that such a sovereign could have raised and maintained an army of a fourth part of that number. We may, however, fairly assume that Igor sailed for Constantinople with a force which was regarded as not only powerful, but almost invincible.

His course was marked by barbarities which far exceeded those of his predecessor Oleg. He displayed all the ferocity of a mean nature, intoxicated with the fatal possession of irresponsible power. He overran and ravaged Paphlagonia, Pontus, and Bithynia. Unhappily for the inhabitants of these countries, the troops of the empire were at a distance, and therefore unable to protect them. Such a circumstance might have elicited the forbearance of generous foes; but it only aggravated the ferocity of Igor and his savage followers. None of the unfortunates who fell into their hands were spared. The Russians gave themselves up to the most revolting excesses of what may be termed a carnival of blood. Some of their helpless victims they crucified; many they impaled, deliberately cut to pieces, or buried alive. Others were suspended by the arms from trees or gibbets, and then used as a target for the arrows of these predatory fiends, to whom their agonies afforded a horrible amusement. The wretches especially sought out the priests, whom they bound and then



put to a dreadful death, by driving with their iron maces long nails into the heads of their miserable victims. Everywhere the track of the invaders was marked by burning villages and mutilated corpses. The ferocious Igor, instead of restraining, encouraged his troops in these shameful outrages upon a defenceless people.

Reports of these terrors soon reached Constantinople. The awe-struck Greeks were roused from their apathy, and resolved this time not to resort to the miserable expedient of purchasing a peace, but to meet their invaders in the field, and extirpate them, or hurl them back. While Igor and his ruffians were leisurely wallowing in blood, the Greeks prepared for vengeance. Marching their troops from all parts, they succeeded in surrounding the invaders, whom they fell upon and slew with as little mercy as they had shown during the time of their unopposed triumph. Igor lost great numbers of his followers, and was scarcely able to reach his ships with the remainder. There new and unexpected terrors awaited them. Theophanes, who commanded the Grecian fleet, attacked them by surprise in sight of the Pharos, and threw amongst them that unquenchable preparation known as the Grecian fire, the art of composing which is lost, but which was ever regarded with terror in ancient times. It was an inflammable substance, which spontaneously kindled on falling, and consumed everything near it. Water made it burn with renewed fury; and only vinegar, wine, or sand were supposed to have the power of restraining its ravages. Its motion is said to have been contrary to that of natural fire, and always followed the direction in which it was thrown—whether downwards, sideways, or in any other manner.

The followers of Igor, terrified by a mode of warfare with which they were unacquainted, leaped into the sea to avoid the fires that appeared to threaten and pursue them. Their dispersed vessels, left to themselves, were, many of them, consumed and sunk; others were run on shore; and the remains of the Russian army who escaped death from fire and water, reached the coasts of Bithynia, along which they fled in panic-stricken confusion. In this situation they were fallen upon by the Greek patriarch, Phocas, at the head of a small but efficient army. The invaders had lost faith in themselves; to use a modern word, they were altogether "demoralised:" great num-

bers perished beneath the weapons of the Greeks, and the rest again fled in disorder.

Regaining the remains of their fleet, they put out to sea under cover of the darkness of night, but were pursued by Theophanes, who again attacked them, and burnt and sunk several of their remaining barks. Indeed, such were the retributive terrors of this unprovoked aggression, that when Igor reached his own territories, scarcely a third of his immense army survived.

Disgraced and weakened, and advanced in years, it might be supposed that this feeble prince would have sought only to spend the remainder of his life in peaceful repose. Such was not the case; his vindictive nature prompted him, by another effort, to obliterate the stigma he had drawn upon himself and his people. He devoted his energies to the collection of a fresh army; and even purchased the mercenary services of his natural enemies, the Petchenegans. The latter eagerly consented; for mutual hatred was for the time forgotten in the common hope of plunder. In the year 944, Igor again advanced against the capital of the Grecian empire. On this occasion the savage monarch met with a fortune he did not deserve. On arriving at the Chersonesus Taurica, now named the Crimea, he was met by messengers from Romanus, the Greek emperor. That potentate having usurped the throne of the Cæsars, felt more anxious to consolidate his power than to repel the external enemies who threatened him. With an almost incredible meanness, he offered to resume the payment of the tribute which had been imposed on his predecessors by the conquering Oleg. Igor was not disposed to accept this offer; for barbarians appear to consider it a sort of disgrace to obtain their demands without bloodshed. His followers, humbled by a remembrance of the issue of their last expedition, were more reasonable than their chief. "Is it not better," said they, "to get gold, silver, and precious stuffs without fighting? Can we tell who will be the victor, and who the vanquished? and can we enter into a covenant with the sea? We march not on land; we are borne upon the abyss of the waters, and are menaced by one common fate." Igor yielded to these representations, accepted the offers of the Greek emperor, and withdrew his army. The Petchenegans, who would not remain satisfied without slaughter and plunder, he sent to ravage the country of the Bulgarians.



Haunted by a restless desire for excitement, or by the insatiable rapacity of the leaders of his troops, Igor now resolved on a less dangerous project, and turned his arms against the Drevlians, a people who had already submitted to his authority. He met with little resistance from a foe unable to oppose his power with much hope of success, and returned loaded with the additional contributions he had exacted. His mean and grasping spirit urged him again to smite or terrify an unresisting people. Despising the Drevlians as a spiritless people incapable of resistance, he dismissed a great part of his army, and returned with but a small body of troops to desolate their country, in the hope of extorting further advantages. He demanded a double tribute, and it was paid. This ready compliance rather excited than satisfied his cupidity, and he insisted on a threefold payment. To enforce his orders, he imprudently

pushed forward into the country, blind to danger in his thirst for gain. The oppressed Drevlians, rendered desperate by repeated outrages, resolved to assassinate him. "He is a mere wolf," said they, "who begins by stealing the sheep one by one, and then comes to fetch away the whole flock. He must be knocked on the head." A number of the Drevlians lay in ambush for their oppressor, and rushing out upon him suddenly, left him dead and weltering in his blood. This act of retribution took place in the year 945, in the neighbourhood of a town called Korosten. There he was buried, and his widow afterwards raised a gigantic mound or high hill over his grave. The close of his inglorious reign of two-and-twenty years terminates what is commonly regarded as an epoch in the history of Russia. The next period was distinguished by the introduction into the country of the Greek form of Christianity.

---

### CHAPTER III.

REGENCY OF OLGA; SHE AVENGES HER HUSBAND'S ASSASSINATION; BECOMES A CHRISTIAN; RESIGNS THE THRONE TO HER SON SVIATOSLAF; DANGER OF KIEF; SVIATOSLAF DIVIDES HIS TERRITORIES BETWEEN HIS THREE SONS; PROCEEDS TO BULGARIA; INVADES GREECE; IS DEFEATED AND SLAIN.

Igor left a son, named Sviatoslaf; but as he was very young at the time of his father's death, Olga, his mother, assumed the government during his minority. She was the Slavonian lady whom Igor had married at the desire of his predecessor Oleg. Her real name is said to have been Prekrasna, which signifies "very beautiful;" but she assumed that of Olga out of compliment to Oleg, who desired her to do so as a mark of the friendship he entertained towards her. She was a woman of more than ordinary ability, and possessed of a more than common portion of the savage temper characteristic of those times. Her first act of power was to avenge the murder of her worthless husband; and this, not upon the assassins, but upon the whole people to which they belonged.

The Drevlians were a Slavonian people, who, dwelling in a locality thickly studded with forests, derived their name, which signifies "a wood," from the land they inhab-

ited. This extended along the river Pripet, where several of the towns once belonging to them are still to be found. They were long regarded as the most savage of Slavonic tribes, and lived like barbarians, without any form of government, or even any idea of the social and civilising rite of marriage. The great teacher Time had, however, modified their barbarism; and in the period of which we are now speaking they cultivated the land, dwelt in towns and villages, and were governed by a prince, named Male. Influenced by ambition (for it cannot be supposed that he was smitten with the faded charms of a princess advanced in years), Male sent ambassadors to Olga to make an offer of his hand. The subtle tigress listened with a seeming pleasure to the description they gave of the person and qualities of their master, and then, abandoning her dissimulation, caused them to be hurled into a pit and buried alive. The savage act was carefully concealed, and a



second and more considerable deputation, the attendance of which had been requested by herself, shared a similar fate. On their arrival, the treacherous woman sent a messenger, who desired them to enjoy the luxury of a bath before they entered her presence. They complied; and while in the bath the doors were made fast, the house set on fire, and the whole of the unsuspecting men perished in the flames. Still using every conceivable precaution that a report of these murders should not reach the ears of the Drevlians, she set out on an expedition to their country, attended by a small army. Arrived there, she dressed her face in smiles, and invited some hundreds of the principal citizens to a solemn banquet. Solemn indeed was this entertainment; for death hovered in the air, and murder lurked behind the seat of every guest. At a given signal, they were surrounded and massacred by the orders of the regal demon, who, with a dreadful sense of enjoyment, thus offered up a sacrifice to the memory of her husband.

Her vengeance, however, was not appeased by this act of wholesale slaughter; for she next proceeded to ravage the whole country, and especially to direct her arms against Korosten, the city near which Igor was slain by those whom his oppressions had provoked past endurance. Though she had ravaged the surrounding country, she was unable to take the capital by force of arms. As usual, therefore, Olga had recourse to artifice. She sent a message to the Drevlians to this effect:—"Why do you hold out so obstinately? All your other towns are in my power; the rest of your people are peacefully tilling the fields whilst you persist in dying of hunger. You have no more to fear from me; I have sufficiently revenged the death of my husband." The unfortunate Drevlians fell into the snare, and offered her a tribute. Olga pretended to disregard it, and said she would accept nothing but a present of three sparrows and a pigeon from each house. The birds were sent readily, and the implacable princess having caused lighted matches to be attached to their tails, immediately set them at liberty. Flying back to the nests under the eaves of the wooden houses of the city, they set it on fire in a thousand places. The inhabitants rushed forth in terror, and perished by the swords of the enemy, who lay beneath the walls awaiting the result of the catastrophe. The prince and all the

chief citizens were among the victims; the common people only being spared from motives of policy. The whole country of the Drevlians was thus subjugated and incorporated with the territories of Russia.

The regal fury then visited the northern part of her dominions, where she built towns and villages, constructed bridges and roads, and left many traces of a superior administrative ability. At this period, Christianity had penetrated into pagan Russia, and obtained a few converts at Kief, where they were not only tolerated but respected. It may seem strange that the merciless Olga should have been attracted by its doctrines; but such was the fact. It has been acutely observed, that, perhaps, the very fanaticism of mind which produced such enormous crimes in the satisfaction of what she deemed a pious revenge, led her, by a somewhat similar impulse, to indulge in the consolations of religion. However that may be, she resolved to become a Christian; and, in order to do so with a becoming dignity, she proceeded in 955 to Constantinople to be instructed in its doctrines, and to receive baptism from the hands of the Greek patriarch. The numerous atrocities of which she had been guilty, formed no obstacles in the estimation of the Greek emperor and priesthood, who were pleased to receive as a convert the chief of a powerful and barbarous nation, which they had hitherto regarded only as a scourge. Constantine Porphyrogeneta, the historian, then occupied the throne of the empire of the East, and he himself led Olga to the baptismal font, and introduced her into the Christian communion under the name of Helena. During her stay at Constantinople, she was treated with an imperial ceremony and honour, and on her departure the emperor made her some valuable presents, consisting of vases and beautiful stuffs, of a kind only to be procured in the East. She, in return, promised to send him furs, wax, and soldiers; for the troops of her nation were held in great estimation by the Greeks; but she never kept her word.

The conduct of Olga was not of a kind likely to induce her subjects to follow her example with respect to religion. The mild precepts of Christianity were despised by such of the fierce Russian chieftains who understood anything of them, and disregarded by those who did not. Sviatoslaf, Olga's son, considered them as calculated to effeminate a soldier and make him a coward.



To the appeals of his mother he returned the inquiry, "Would you have me be a laughing-stock to my friends?" It is worthy of remark, that the people, though they generally held aloof from the new religion, did not attempt to resist it by persecution. To that very circumstance may be attributed the tardiness of its progress. Had the new converts been made martyrs to their faith, it would have taken a rapid root in the sympathy and superstition of the multitude. Olga founded churches and encouraged the residence of priests in her capital with no better success. The Russian people were not prepared for Christianity, and as yet it took no root. Olga's new-born zeal for religion appears to have dictated her next public act, which was the resignation of the throne to her son. Some uncertainty exists as to the time when this event took place; but it followed rapidly upon her conversion, which appears to have exercised a beneficial influence upon her ferocious nature.

Sviatoslaf I. was a princely barbarian, who revived the predatory and savage habits of the Varangians, together with the ambitious feelings of the Slavi. He was a remarkable character; animated with a passion for war, and a defiance of fatigue and hardships. Ségur terms him the Achilles, the Charles XII. of that epoch. The social and moral progress of a state, its advancement in agriculture, commerce, or other primitive arts, he neither understood or regarded. War, without any suitable cause; conquest, for the sake of extending his authority;—these were the cherished aims of his existence. Regarding the regal palace at Kief as little better than a magnificent prison, he abandoned it, and took to the field with an army composed of the most reckless and savage of his people. For the future, the camp was his home; and he appeared ambitious of exhibiting the hardihood and rough self-denial of his nature. Emulating the roving Kalmuks, he lived chiefly upon horseflesh, which he cut up himself with his sword, and broiled upon the naked fire. He used no vessels for culinary purposes, and dined in common with his guards. The use of horseflesh was convenient to one whose life was devoted to war, since the same animal that carried the soldier, served in times of extremity for his food. The other habits of the new sovereign were as rude and as severely simple as his diet. He disdained to sleep in a tent;

but, braving the inclemency of the Russian sky, passed his nights upon the bare earth, with a saddle for a pillow, and a saddle-cloth or a cloak for a covering. In matters of personal indulgence, he abolished all distinction, and shared the hardships of the meanest of his followers. Such a leader was necessarily popular; and his soldiers were prepared to follow and obey him with a rigid submission amounting to devotion. One point of the character of Sviatoslaf is deserving of honourable notice. Unlike his subtle mother, he did not avail himself of the advantages likely to result from unexpected attacks, but always prefaced active hostilities by a declaration of war.

For some time the warlike prince was at a loss to find an enemy upon whom he could exhibit his prowess. At length he turned his arms against the Kozans, a people who had poured down from the eastern shore of the Euxine, and subdued some of the Slavonic tribes dwelling in the south of Russia. The khan of the Kozans was defeated in a sanguinary battle, and his capital, a fortified city on the Don, taken possession of by the victor in the year 964. Other successes over these people followed; and thenceforth, it has been dramatically said, the name of the Kozans disappears from the page of history.

The warlike services of Sviatoslaf were next purchased by Nicephorus Phocas, the Greek emperor. The repeated incursions of the Hungarians upon the territories of the latter had been secretly assisted by the Bulgarians, and it was against them that Nicephorus derived the aid of the Russians. Sviatoslaf eagerly embraced the design, and entering the Danube with a fleet containing 60,000 men, captured the chief towns that lay along the banks of that extensive river. His success inspired him with the idea of annexing these newly acquired possessions to his Russian dominions. To accomplish this ambitious but unwise design, he resolved to transfer the seat of his government to the city of Yamboly.

While the grand prince was in the pursuit of conquest abroad, his own territories were subjected to the rude feet of invaders. Those ancient enemies of the Russians, the Petchenegans, taking advantage of his absence, desolated the whole country in the direction of Kief, and then set down before the city in great force. Though it was strongly built and enclosed within fortifications, yet the garrison it contained was



feeble; and the inhabitants, amongst whom were the mother and sons of Sviatoslaf, were in the most imminent danger. Besides, the city was not supplied with provisions necessary to enable it to stand a siege; and the only choice of its inhabitants appeared to lie between famine and the swords of the invaders. They contrived, however, by a stratagem to inform Prititch, a Russian general, who was posted with a small army on the other side of the Dnieper, of the position in which they were placed; and he resolved on making an effort for their relief. Embarking at daybreak, he commanded his soldiers to blow their trumpets and raise their voices in tumultuous shouts. These were answered from within the city by the clang of military instruments and joyous shouts of welcome. The stratagem succeeded; the Petchenegs, believing that the victorious army of Sviatoslaf was approaching to the rescue, were seized with terror, and scarcely restrained by their leader from taking to an ignominious flight. Requesting an interview with Prititch, he inquired whether he was the grand prince. The Russian leader adroitly replied that he was but the commander of the vanguard of Sviatoslaf, who was himself advancing with a formidable army. After a courteous interview, and an exchange of gifts, the two leaders parted; the prince of the Petchenegs retired with his followers, and Kiev was saved.

On receiving information of the danger of his capital, Sviatoslaf hurried from his conquests in Bulgaria, and following the retreating Petchenegs, overtook and defeated them. After the infliction of this punishment, he generously permitted them to return to their homes without further chastisement. Soon afterwards the aged princess Olga, or Helena, was gathered to that silent resting-place to which, during her turbulent career, she had sent so many of her enemies. History has accorded to her the merit of being an able ruler; yet it is scarcely possible, in its numerous records, to find a woman more vindictive, savage, and remorseless. Her crimes did not prevent the Russian church from bestowing upon her memory the inappropriate honour of canonization; and the name of St. Olga was long cherished as that of the princess who introduced Christianity into Russia.

Sviatoslaf now resolved on returning to Bulgaria, and concluding there the conquest he had begun. The Bulgarians were at this period rising rapidly into importance as a

trading nation, and they carried on extensive commercial operations with Persia, India, Greece, France, and, through Russia, with the countries that lay to the north. Their wealth aroused the avarice of Sviatoslaf; and telling his chieftains that he preferred Yamboly to Kiev as a residence, he prepared for a second expedition, with the intention of converting the Bulgarian city into the capital of Russia. Before departing, he committed an error that might have led to the utter ruin of the state, and which was not rectified without much bloodshed. Considering the claims of his family, and regardless of the interests of his people, he divided the Russian territories between his three sons, retaining in himself only the nominal sovereignty. Yaropolk he installed in the government of Kiev; Oleg, that of the country of the Drevlians; and Vladimir, a natural son by one of Olga's attendants, in the ancient throne of Novgorod. In addition to the danger of thus partitioning a state, the principle was introduced that the grand prince had a right to divide his territories, and regulate as he pleased the order of the succession.

Having provided for the government of his dominions, Sviatoslaf, in 970, set out on his second expedition to Bulgaria, from which he was destined never to return. Advancing upon Yamboly, his troops were attacked with great bravery and driven back with terrible loss. Deeming their destruction certain, they determined to sell their lives as dearly as they could. This resolve once taken, they fought with such ferocity as to strike terror into their assailants, and to turn the scale of victory. The efforts of the Russians appeared almost superhuman; the astonished Bulgarians were defeated, and yielded their capital to the enemy, who once more was master of the fertile territory on the right bank of the Danube.

Submission did not restore peace to Bulgaria: that country was yet to be the theatre of more important struggles. The Greek emperor Nicephorus, who had originally engaged Sviatoslaf to descend upon Bulgaria, had been succeeded on the throne by his assassin, John Zimisces. The latter at once perceived the error his predecessor had committed in attracting the ambitious Russians to the banks of the Danube; for they were a far more dangerous enemy than the less warlike Bulgarians. Finding that a pledge had been given to Nicephorus that the Russians should not occupy the con-



quered territory, Zimisce demanded of Sviatoslaf the immediate evacuation of Bulgaria. The Russian prince not only refused compliance, but added, that he would shortly come to Constantinople and drive the Greeks into Asia. On receiving this defiant answer, Zimisce instantly prepared for war; for he was a man who, to quote the language of Gibbon, "in a diminutive body possessed the spirit and abilities of a hero." The Russian prince was secretly encouraged in his breach of treaty by a Greek patrician, named Kolokir, who aspired to the throne of Constantinople himself, and hoped to obtain it by the assistance of the Russians, whom he intended to bribe by the relinquishment of Bulgaria. Sviatoslaf fell in with the schemes of the traitor; for it was important to him to place an emperor of his own choosing on the throne of the Eastern world.

Sviatoslaf commenced the war. Compelling the conquered Bulgarians and other nations to join his forces, he succeeded in raising an army, said to amount to the enormous number of 300,000 men. Advancing into Thrace, he ravaged the country as far as Adrianople, where his vast host was defeated through a stratagem of the commandant of that town, and driven back upon Yamboly. He was followed and besieged there the following year by a Greek army, under Zimisce in person. The assault was rapid and successful, and the city taken by the Greeks. Eight thousand Russians threw themselves into the royal citadel; though held to be impregnable, it was soon set on fire by Zimisce, and the greater part of these wretched men perished in the flames. Sviatoslaf, however, kept the field with a remnant of his army, whose fidelity he attempted to secure by the ferocity with which he punished disaffection. Victory still sat upon the standards of the Greeks, and most of the towns of Bulgaria surrendered to them. The Russian prince, after pursuing a wandering and predatory career, shut himself and his followers up in Dura-stole, the last important town which had not yet submitted to the Greeks. There he was followed by the energetic Zimisce, and defeated in an obstinate combat in which he ventured to engage. Blockaded by land and sea, the Russians were threatened with the horrors of starvation. In vain did they frequently rush out upon their foes, and exhibit the most despairing courage. They were constantly repulsed;

and the advisers of Sviatoslaf implored him to sue for peace. The undaunted prince rejected this advice, and resolved to risk everything upon one last effort. Placing himself at the head of his troops, he made a final sortie; and having no hope but from the desperation of his followers, ordered the gates of the city to be closed the moment they had left it, thus leaving no alternative but death or victory. The battle, though obstinate and sanguinary, was but a brief one, and ended in the total defeat of the Russians.

Their prince was now compelled to beg for peace, which the victors had the moderation or prudence to grant. Having bound himself, by the oaths he regarded as most sacred, to observe the conditions dictated to him, Sviatoslaf turned his steps towards Russia, attended by the half-clothed and half-starved remnant of his army. Notwithstanding the entreaties of those by whom he was surrounded, this wilful man insisted on embarking on the Borysthenes, the shores of which were inhabited by his ancient foes the Petchenegans. The latter, aware of the deplorable condition of the retreating Russians, assembled in great force, and awaited their approach near the rock of the cataracts. The year was closing when the grand prince arrived near that spot; and there he was compelled to pass the winter, beset by the miseries of cold and famine. On the return of spring he endeavoured to cut a passage through the ranks of his enemies; but defeat again attended him, and this time he himself perished in the encounter. The prince of the Petchenegans had his skull converted into a goblet, and encircled it with gold, on which this moral reflection was inscribed—"In the attempt to seize the property of others, thou didst lose thine own." Sviatoslaf fell a victim to his own turbulence in the year 973.

Again are we about to enter upon what is justly regarded as another phase in the history of the Russian state. "The five sovereigns," says a writer whom we have previously quoted, "Ruric, Oleg, Igor, Olga, and Sviatoslaf, reigned alone and dominant. In each of these cases there was but a single heir to the throne, so that the country was, in its infancy, auspiciously saved from the evils of partition, and enabled to accumulate strength and coherence. The only instances of delegated rule—those of the two brothers of Ruric—lapsed before



the death of the sovereign; the accession was therefore regulated by an accident that confirmed the conservation and power of the state. During these reigns the character of the sovereigns, with the exception of the feeble Igor, harmonised admirably with the demands of the time. The firmness of Ruric, the boldness of Oleg, the wild devotion and ferocity of Olga, and the savage valour of Sviatoslaf, contributed severally to enlarge, to bind, and to establish the empire. Many mistakes were doubtless committed; but the science of government

was then young; and better tempers and more consistent laws might have failed to preserve the allegiance, as they could hardly have permitted the lawlessness, of the banded savages that prowled over the face of the country. But with the partition of the land amongst three princes of unequal capacity came a long train of misfortunes, which we shall find alternately averted and exasperated by circumstances quite as fortuitous as those by which the first struggles of this formidable power were rendered successful."

#### CHAPTER IV.

YAROPOLK SEIZES UPON THE DOMINIONS OF HIS BROTHERS; IS DRIVEN FROM THE THRONE BY VLADIMIR I.; HE PUNISHES THE TRAITOR BLUDE; EXTENDS HIS DOMINIONS; INORDINATE LICENTIOUSNESS OF VLADIMIR; HE ADOPTS CHRISTIANITY, AND INTRODUCES THAT FORM OF RELIGION INTO RUSSIA; HIS SUBSEQUENT WEAKNESS AND DEATH.

RUSSIA was now governed by three princes. The title of grand-duke no longer existed, and with it the paramount sovereignty was destroyed. Yaropolk ruled in Kief, Oleg in the country of the Drevlians, and Vladimir in Novgorod. Yaropolk is described as of a weak, inactive nature, ever prone to be led into wrong by the counsels of his subordinates. Oleg was rash, vindictive, and unprincipled; while Vladimir was ambitious, romantically brave, inordinately licentious, original in genius, and energetic in action. Under such circumstances, it was not difficult to predict which of these princes would become paramount, if even he did not subdue his brothers and reunite their territories to his own.

Svenald, an old warrior, who had been the esteemed friend of Sviatoslaf, followed the fortunes of Yaropolk. The savage Oleg had, either from provocation or caprice, conceived a dislike for the son of Svenald. Meeting the young man in a wood during a hunting party, Oleg fell upon and assassinated him. The father resolved on revenge, and instigated the feeble-minded Yaropolk to raise an army and invade the country of the Drevlians. The fierce Oleg collected his forces, and the brothers met in battle. The Drevlians were defeated; and in the

confusion of flight, Oleg was hurled over the broken parapet of a bridge, and either drowned or crushed to death by the multitude of horses and troops that fell upon him. Yaropolk pretended to mourn for his brother's fate; but he took possession of his territory.

Vladimir is described as giving way to such a passionate grief in consequence of the violent death of Oleg, that he retired from Novgorod; and crossing the sea in a fit of despondency, took up his abode with the Varangians. It is far more probable that he feared the power of his surviving brother, and fled to provide for his own safety. Yaropolk, finding Novgorod left without a ruler, yielded to the importunities of his followers, and seized that also. Thus the Russian dominions became again united under the sway of a single prince.

Vladimir remained a fugitive among the Varangians for a period of two years, during which he occupied himself in collecting a band of adventurers sufficient to enable him to recover his lost territory. Returning suddenly to Novgorod, he was received by the people with joy. The chiefs who governed in the name of Yaropolk were taken by surprise, and, without attempting resistance, sought their safety by submission.



Vladimir dismissed them with a message to his brother, that he would soon see him at Kief.

While Vladimir was preparing to seize his brother's throne, he was attracted by the charms of the daughter of Rogvolode, prince of Polotsk. Yaropolk also was a suitor for the hand of the lady; and the father, fearing to offend either of the brothers, referred them to his daughter. The lady's choice was rapid, and her answer coarsely uncourteous. Vladimir was the son of one of the attendants of the princess Olga; and in reference to this stain on his birth, and also to a custom which then existed for brides to pull off the boots of their husbands on the wedding night, she replied, "I will never unboot the son of a slave. I choose Yaropolk." This insulting answer naturally aroused the anger of Vladimir, and he resolved on a revenge in the severity of which we forget the offence. He marched against Rogvolode, defeated him in battle, slew him and his two sons with his own hand; and, while reeking with their blood, compelled the indiscreet princess, who had been the cause of these calamities, to become his wife.

Flushed with this savage triumph, Vladimir led his army against Kief. The city was capable of prolonged resistance, and its inhabitants were faithful to their ruler. The feeble mind of Yaropolk, however, was influenced by the suggestions of a villanous counsellor, named Blude. Though this traitor had received the highest marks of distinction from his prince, yet, influenced by promises of reward, he entered into a conspiracy with Vladimir for his destruction. He persuaded Yaropolk that the people were treacherously disposed towards him, and convinced the shallow prince that his only chance of safety lay in flight. The latter adopted this suggestion; and the inhabitants of Kief, finding themselves deserted, were induced to submit to Vladimir. The timid Yaropolk did not by flight secure the safety he coveted. The traitor Blude accompanied him, and, as the wretched prince fled from place to place like a hunted hare, informed Vladimir of his hiding-place and his designs. Yaropolk was at length rendered desperate by a fear of his pursuers and the sufferings he endured, and resolved to throw himself on the mercy of his brother. He trusted to a man devoid of fraternal emotions: as he was advancing to throw himself into the arms of Vladimir, he was assassinated by

some of the attendants of the latter. Again the Russian dominions were united under one prince, who, despite his crimes, possessed the ability to govern them.

The throne was now filled by Vladimir I. His first act was to seize and debauch the widow of his brother Yaropolk, a lady far advanced in pregnancy. As a reward for her submission to his desires, he adopted the infant of which she subsequently became the mother. His next was to punish the traitor Blude, notwithstanding that he derived the advantages arising from the guilt of this northern Judas. Vladimir knew that a man who was so ungrateful and treacherous to one master, was incapable of faithfully serving another. For three days he entertained the miscreant at his court with a royal magnificence, and conferred on him the chief dignities of the state. On the fourth, Blude was summoned to the presence of his sovereign, who said—"I have kept my promise strictly. I have received you with welcome, and heaped unwonted honours upon your head. This I have done as your friend. To-day, as judge, I condemn the traitor and assassin of his prince." This sentence was followed by immediate execution, and the traitor expiated his guilt with his blood.

The fierce Varangians, by whose assistance Vladimir had recovered his authority, were clamorous for the reward of their services, and desired that he would compel the inhabitants of Kief to pay them a tribute. The grand prince had a wise objection to subject his people to any oppression but his own. Though unprepared to resist the demands of his greedy dependents, he hesitated to comply with their demands, and fed them with promises, while he avoided giving any decisive answer to their applications. During the delay thus created, he so strengthened himself that the Varangians became convinced of the hopelessness of pressing their claims. He was too powerful to be influenced by intimidation, too crafty to be deceived into compliance, and too firm to yield to solicitation. Perceiving this state of things, the Varangians requested his permission to make an incursion into Greece, and pay themselves by plunder. To this he consented, after selecting the bravest of them for his own service. Still unwilling to convert the Greek emperor into an enemy, he secretly informed that potentate of the designs of the desperadoes, and desired him to arrest them and disperse them over his



dominions, so that thus divided, they should cease to be an object of alarm to either government.

The brave and subtle Vladimir was now firmly seated upon his throne, the authority of which he greatly extended by his ability and warlike exertions. He subdued many neighbouring peoples, and enlarged his dominions on almost every hand. Inflated by success, he appears to have been inspired with a sense of gratitude towards the pagan gods of his nation, though it is not unlikely he was desirous of captivating the people by a pompous display of religious ceremonies. He caused a new statue of the god Perune, with a silver head, to be erected near his palace, and announced his intention of propitiating the image by a sacrifice of some prisoners taken in war. His followers suggested that the god would be better pleased with the blood of a victim selected from his own people. Vladimir consented to this arrangement; and the lot, probably by design, fell upon a young Varangian, who had been educated by his father in the Christian faith. Great preparations were made for the savage ceremonial; but, at the appointed hour, the afflicted father not only refused to surrender his son, but denounced the proceeding as a sanguinary superstition. The priests and people, enraged equally by the disappointment and the insult to their carved deity, rushed into the house, and put both father and son to death. The unfortunate men were eventually canonised, and remain the first and only martyrs of the Russian church.

Vladimir indulged in an inordinate licentiousness. He had married six wives; and had so many establishments of concubines, that these female ministers to his pleasure are said to have amounted altogether to eight hundred. Still his lustful nature was not satisfied; every fresh pleasing face and form attracted his attention, and he violated the honour of the wives and daughters of many of his subjects. An ancient chronicler remarked, that no woman of any personal beauty was safe from the lust of this second Solomon. He did not, however, perceive the incongruity of this reckless gratification of his passions with his zeal for any religion that recognised even the scantiest moral duties. A wild zeal for the religion of his country filled his mind, and communicated itself, in some degree, from the ruler to the people. He built new temples in honour of the pagan gods recog-

nised by his nation, and enriched them with a magnificence new to their barbarous worshippers. The valour of the Russian sovereign in war, his power over his dominions, and his awakened zeal in favour of his religion, attracted the notice of distant states; the representatives of four of whom sought to convert him to the faith they followed. The eastern Bulgarians solicited his attention to the sensual and warlike religion of Mohammed. The voluptuous mind of Vladimir dwelt with pleasure upon the description of its paradise, where rose-lipped hours ministered to the pleasures of the faithful; but he was repelled by the doctrine of circumcision and the interdiction of wine. The Germans unfolded to him the doctrines of the Roman church; but this he rejected on account of its pope, whose asserted power over princes he regarded as not only inadmissible, but monstrous. The laws of Moses were laid before him by the professors of Judaism; but this he rejected, because he thought it irrational to accept a religion from a people without a country, who were, moreover, wanderers under the curse of heaven. A priest from Constantinople described to him the doctrines and ceremonials of the Christian church of the East, and these did not seem open to any apparent objection.

Discussion and reflection had shaken the faith of Vladimir in the ancient superstitions of his people; but a conflict took place in his mind as to the religion he should adopt in lieu of them. In this situation, he composed a commission of ten of the most thoughtful of his chiefs, and sent them into the several countries where the various religions were received, to investigate the arguments on which they were based, and to report which was the most worthy of adoption. The envoys proceeded on their journey. The church of the Arabian prophet was not to their taste, because it made too many demands upon their self-control. The Roman churches in Germany repelled them, on account of the meanness of their decorations and the tawdry finery of their priests. When, however, they beheld the minarets of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and the extravagant magnificence of the Greek religion, they were touched with emotions of wonder and awe, and concluded that they had at length found the true mode of worship. Returning home, they made a highly favourable report of it to Vladimir, and added—"If the



Greek religion was not the best, Olga, your ancestress, the wisest of women, would never have thought of adopting it." The imagination of the grand prince was excited by the narratives to which he listened; and after some deliberations with his council, he resolved to adopt the Greek form of Christianity, and undergo the public ceremony of baptism.

Here, however, a difficulty arose; for Vladimir would not be made a member of the Christian church unless the baptismal rite was performed by an ecclesiastical dignitary of the highest order, and none such were to be found in Russia. To solicit from the Greek emperors, Basil and Constantine, the assistance of their archbishops, seemed derogatory to his imperious nature; and therefore he resorted to a singular and circuitous mode of obtaining that which he would not condescend to accept as a favour. Actuated even in this matter by the fierce spirit of his times, he declared war upon Greece, that he might extort from her that service he was too haughty to obtain by the readiest means! Having assembled a numerous army, he proceeded, by sea, to the rich and powerful city of Kherson, in the Taurica Chersonesus, now called the Crimea. Laying siege to the city, he put up this strange prayer to the Deity:—"O God, grant me thy help to take this town, that I may carry from it Christians and priests, to instruct me and my people, and to convey the true religion into my dominions!"

The siege was prolonged over six months, and a terrible destruction of human life took place, to satisfy the whimsical pride of a pagan prince. So obstinate was the resistance, and so numerous the reverses experienced by the army of Vladimir, that he would have been compelled to retire from the walls of Kherson, but that a treacherous priest within the city betrayed it to him. This traitor, either from malignity or a mad excess of zeal in favour of his religion, contrived, by means of a letter tied to an arrow, and shot into the Russian camp, to inform Vladimir that the water-springs from which the subterranean pipes of the city were supplied, were situated immediately in his rear. The springs were discovered, the water diverted into other channels, and the citizens, after suffering the horrors of extreme thirst, were compelled to surrender.

Vladimir could now be baptized with such an amount of ceremony as he deemed

becoming his dignity. But his religious emotions, though probably sincere, were not unmixed with political motives of a very worldly nature. He demanded from the Grecian emperors the hand of their sister Anna in marriage, and accompanied his message by a threat, that he would lay siege to Constantinople in the event of refusal. It was his intention, by this match, to acquire an indirect claim upon the throne of the Greek empire, which, at some favourable time, he or his successors might enforce. The emperors Basil and Constantine were not in a condition to refuse compliance; and, after some hesitation, they yielded—stipulating, however, that he should embrace the Christian faith. Accordingly, in the year 988, Vladimir was received into the bosom of the Greek church, under the name of Basil, and united to the Princess Anna, who is reported to have been by no means flattered with the conquest she had made. The Russian sovereign, in return, restored the territory he had so recently captured, listened to an exposition of his new creed, and returned to Kief, carrying with him priests, relics, vases of holy water, and images of saints.

The royal convert resolved on at once forcing upon his subjects the religion of which he had so recently become a member, and with which he must necessarily have been very imperfectly acquainted. With a decision natural to a despotic barbarian, he resolved on the disgrace and destruction of the pagan gods, from the worship of whom he had fallen so lately. Perune, the silver-headed and golden-whiskered father of the gods, first excited his anger. He caused the image to be stripped of all its costly ornaments, and after exposing the naked log to the people, had it tied to the tail of a horse, beaten with cudgels by twelve stout soldiers, and then thrown into the Borysthene, amidst the shouts and groans of the multitude. No divine vengeance followed this seemingly impious act; and the people began to think that Perune was but a wooden and powerless god after all. A belief in his divinity was not, however, universally extinguished. For, some time afterwards, a legend related, that when the statue of Perune at Novgorod was hurled into the river, the figure of the god rose from the water, and, casting his staff amongst the people, exclaimed, "Citizens, I leave you that in remembrance of me!" The minor gods of Russia were disposed of



in a similarly arbitrary manner; and Vladimir then issued a proclamation, commanding all his subjects to assemble on a certain day at Kief, and be baptized there, on the banks of the river. The people appear to have entertained but little affection for the ancient faith, as they offered no opposition. "That must be a good religion," said they, "which is adopted by the prince and the boyards." In the remote districts of Russia, however, paganism lingered for some centuries; it was more in accordance than the new faith with the rude and wonder-loving barbarians of those northern forests.

Not satisfied even with these vigorous proceedings, Vladimir zealously endeavoured to enforce Christianity wherever he had formerly enjoined the superstitions of paganism. He lavished the revenues of his state in building churches and houses for pious purposes, and instituted public repasts, in imitation of the love-feasts of the early Christians. Certainly, it must be admitted, that the religion he adopted exercised a softening influence upon his mind, and induced him to lead a purer life. He dismissed his trains of concubines, and is reported to have become a pattern of conjugal fidelity. Instead of the avidity he had shown to shed blood in unjust wars, he hesitated even to condemn a criminal to death. He also introduced some good judicial regulations, and effected many improvements in the various towns throughout the country.

Always prone to go to extremes, Vladimir now became effeminate and almost imbecile in his mildness. The Petchenegans, taking advantage of this state of the Russian prince, made frequent incursions into his dominions. In one of these, the two armies lay on opposite sides of the river Sula, the waters of which fall into the Dnieper. A battle appeared inevitable; when the Petcheneg chief proposed to Vladimir to spare the blood of their respective troops, by deciding the quarrel by single combat between two champions, one chosen from each army; the people whose representative should perish in the strife, binding themselves to abstain from hostilities for the space of three years. Vladimir's pride forbade him to reject the proposal; but he acceded to it unwillingly; for he knew not where to find a man of sufficient strength and courage to cope with the gigantic champion of the Petchenegans. On the day appointed for the combat he was compelled to request a delay. During

the interval thus obtained, an old man, who, together with his four sons, had long served in the Russian army, came forward and offered the services of a fifth son, who, though but a youth, was gifted with prodigious strength. Before the offer was accepted, the aspirant was ordered to exhibit his prowess in an encounter with an infuriated bull. The animal was irritated with red-hot irons, and then set at liberty. The young athlete struck the bull down, and speedily dispatching the animal, tore off his skin as a trophy. Vladimir was satisfied, and surveyed the beardless champion with feelings of hope. The day of trial arrived, and the combatants met in an open space between the two camps. The bulky Petchenegan looked contemptuously on the undeveloped yet well-proportioned and muscular frame of his adversary. His feeling of triumph was, however, premature; his antagonist rushed upon him at once, brought him to the earth with a well-directed blow, and there dispatched him. It is said that the Petchenegans fled in terror on seeing the fall of their champion: this is doubtful; but they observed the agreement into which they had entered, and abstained from aggression for the space of three years. The young victor, who followed the humble occupation of a currier, was, together with his father, raised to the rank of nobility, and a town erected as a memorial of his honourable encounter.

During the three years, the weakness of Vladimir appeared to increase; and on the expiration of that period, the Petchenegans again took to the field. They laid siege to Vassilef, a town built by the grand prince, who, in endeavouring to succour it, was defeated and wounded, and only saved his life by hiding under the arch of a bridge, over which his victorious enemies passed in pursuit of him. This was in 996; and in the following year he was subjected to fresh indignities by his untiring foes.

The latter years of the once fierce and powerful monarch were bereft of the brilliancy which attended the earlier period of his reign, and his life was extinguished in gloom and bitterness. Perplexed as to the mode in which he should provide for his numerous sons, he adopted the weak and fatal expedient of partitioning his dominions amongst them. This he did during his life; and, while parting with his provinces, retained only the title of grand prince, and a tribute from each of his sons. Yaroslaf,



the one to whom he had given Novgorod, refused the tribute, and prepared to resist the paramount authority of his father. The aged parent, though struck to the heart by this ingratitude, yet retained enough of his former energy to collect an army and march upon Novgorod, with the object of reducing his rebellious son to submission. The effort, however, was above his strength; and the contemplation of the unnatural conflict was as a sword in his heart. Unable to reach the scene of expected strife, he expired of grief on the road. His death took place in 1015, after a protracted reign of five-and-forty years.

Notwithstanding his serious defects of character, it must be granted that Vladimir was no common man. Bold, resolute, subtle, and gifted with an acute though not penetrating intelligence, the force of his mind was confined by caprice and unregulated impulsiveness. A fratricide and a despot, he might elicit our severest reprehension; but we ought not to judge his conduct in these respects by our modern estimates of morality and duty. He was tinctured with the barbarity of the age in which he dwelt, and acted in compliance with its ferocious instincts. Yet in some respects he was in advance of his time. He rejected the effete

idolatry of his country, and replaced it by the purer spirit of Christianity. He established schools for the education of different classes of the community, and placed them under the direction of learned men from Greece. These efforts were regarded with repugnance by his people, who considered educational arts as identified with sorcery. So great was their dislike to the instruction introduced, that Vladimir could only obtain scholars for these institutions by the unjustifiable means of compelling the attendance of the children of his people. He also strove to improve the taste of his people by employing the architects of Greece to erect palaces, churches, and other buildings, and to redeem his dominions from the native desert by felling forests, and erecting towns on spots which previously harboured only wolves and other beasts of prey. Though many of his reforms were vehemently resisted by his people, yet they mourned his loss, and he obtained from them the title of the Great, on account of his abilities as a ruler; while the infant Christian church of Russia canonised him as a saint, and pronounced him as coequal with the apostles. Nearly eight centuries afterwards the empress Catherine instituted an order of knighthood to his honour.

## CHAPTER V.

SVIATOPOLK, BY TREACHERY AND MURDER, UNITES THE PRINCIPALITIES OF RUSSIA UNDER HIS SCEPTRE; HE IS SUPPORTED BY THE DUKE OF POLAND, BUT DRIVEN FROM THE THRONE BY YAROSLAF; THE LATTER BECOMES GRAND PRINCE; HIS CODE OF LAWS; HE PARTITIONS RUSSIA AMONGST HIS SONS, AND DIES.

THE death of Vladimir was followed by a period of confusion and unnatural warfare. Sviatopolk, the adopted son of the late grand prince, born of the beautiful widow of Yaropolk, resolved on the immediate execution of a design he had long entertained of setting aside his half-brothers and re-establishing the divided country under his own authority. With this view he caused three of them to be assassinated; and the other sons of Vladimir, with one exception, fearing a similar fate, refrained from opposing so reckless and remorseless a man.

Yaroslaf, the Prince of Novgorod, resolved

on making a stand against the ambitious projects of the usurping fratricide. So vigorous were the efforts of Yaroslaf, and so ably was he seconded by his subjects, whose affection he had won by the clemency of his rule, that he soon drove his unprincipled brother out of Kief, and compelled him to take refuge with his father-in-law, Boleslas, the Duke of Poland. The latter yielded to the solicitations of the fugitive, and advanced into Russia at the head of a powerful force, with the intention of restoring Sviatopolk to the throne. Yaroslaf was prepared, and met the invaders on the banks of the Bug. For



some days each army remained encamped within sight of the other, neither caring to commence the conflict. At length a Russian soldier stood upon the bank of the river and mimicked the corpulent size and gait of the Polish duke. Boleslas, whose intrepidity had obtained for him the surname of the Lion-hearted, was incensed beyond the bounds of prudence by this insult. Plunging into the water, he commanded his soldiers to follow him, and the Poles soon landed on the other side, and stood face to face with their foes. A protracted battle followed, but the Russians were defeated, and Sviatopolk re-seated on the throne he had won by treachery and murder.

The disheartened Yaroslaf fled to Novgorod, and was preparing to retire across the Baltic, but the loyalty of his subjects restrained him. Destroying the ships that were to take him away, they laid heavy taxes upon themselves for the sake of engaging mercenary troops to assist his cause. The prosperity of Sviatopolk was of brief duration. Influenced by a mean jealousy of the Poles who had succoured him, he conceived a design for their destruction. This treacherous scheme was discovered by Boleslas, who proceeded to take a decisive revenge. He gave Kief over to be plundered by his followers, who, infuriated at the baseness of their allies, could with difficulty be restrained from reducing the city to ashes. Loaded with spoil, they then returned to their own country. They were followed by Sviatopolk, who, maddened by wrath, sought to obtain vengeance for the desolated capital; but he was defeated in a battle on the banks of the Bug, and compelled to return to Kief in confusion. Yaroslaf seized this opportunity of hurling the usurper from his throne. Marching rapidly against the fratricide, he defeated him in a fiercely contested engagement. Sviatopolk deserted his troops before the battle was ended, and perished in a miserable condition on the road.

Yaroslaf now ascended the throne as grand prince, and it soon became apparent that the government could not be in better hands. His claim, however, was disputed by his brother Motislaf, the seventh son of Vladimir, and Prince of Tmutaracan, who had gained some distinction as an able soldier. Motislaf desired Yaroslaf to cede to him a part of the fraternal appanage he governed. The latter consented; but the territory he gave did not satisfy the expectations of his brother, who immediately resorted to arms to

obtain by force that which he was unable to get by supplication. In the war which followed, Motislaf was triumphant; but he generously divided the Russian dominions between himself and his brother, with whom he continued to remain in amity until his death, which took place seven years afterwards. The Russian dominions were then again united under one ruler.

The commencement of the reign of Yaroslaf was rendered unsettled by numerous wars, in most of which he was successful. He carried hostilities into Finland, Livonia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria, and even penetrated into Greece, where he suffered a defeat. He did not, however, seek to acquire distinction by feats of arms; he seldom sought war, and usually entrusted the command of his armies to his lieutenants. Notwithstanding his ingratitude to his aged father, he behaved well to his people. He governed with wisdom, and addressed himself to the noble task of exalting the character of his subjects. Especially devoting himself to the spread of education and the promotion of religion, he caused the Scriptures to be translated into the Slavonian language, and even accomplished the laborious task of transcribing several copies with his own hand. But the great work of his life was the construction of a code of laws, which, though it may read strangely to modern ears, was doubtless adapted to the wants of the time. Hitherto, written laws were rare, and always liable to be interpreted by the strong in their own favour. Princes had been occupied rather in protecting their dominions from aggression than in administering justice to their subjects. The result was a state of society in which life and property was insecure, the arts unknown, and commerce almost stagnant.

A rapid glance at this code of laws will give some insight into the character of the Russian people at this period. It was couched in a spirit of paternal despotism. "Respect this ordinance," said the prince; "it must be the rule of your conduct. Such is my will." Its first article constituted the law the public avenger only in cases where the friends of the murdered man were unable to retaliate on the criminal themselves. This, doubtless, was but the reduction of an existing practice into a written law, and the legal permission of outrages the ruler felt it impossible to restrain. Though life was taken in retaliation, the law was not broken, and order



appeared to exist. To have made the laws widely different to all established customs, would have been to run the risk of their being laid aside altogether. If there were no relatives to revenge the death of a murdered man, the assassin was to pay a fine regulated according to the rank of his victim. In this scale, the life of a woman was estimated at only half the value of that of a man—a circumstance which showed how highly mere brute strength was regarded; while no fine was imposed on the murderer of a slave. In this case, the shedder of human blood was to pay to the owner the value of the slave, if he had been killed wantonly; but if the victim had insulted his assassin, the law required nothing at the hands of the latter. It is also significant of the scarcely disguised contempt which was cherished against the pursuit of learning, that while for the murder of the prince's cook, or other domestic, a penalty of forty grivnas was to be paid to the state, only twelve grivnas was the fine demanded in the event of the victim being a schoolmaster!

Though Yaroslaf's code of laws paid so small a respect to the lives of slaves that it would not deprive the rich of the savage gratification of slaying one on any caprice, yet it held the honour of free Russians in great estimation. For striking a blow, a fine was exacted equal in amount to that imposed for the murder of a schoolmaster or artisan. The offence of pulling a man by the beard, or knocking out one of his teeth, was visited with a similar penalty. Many regulations were framed for the security of property; but one law seemed made as if with the intention of favouring dishonest men. If a man lent money to another who denied the loan on oath, the latter was released from the debt. Such an enactment in a country where the legal interest of money was forty per cent., was calculated to create fraud, and to extinguish trading transactions.

The code divided the population into three classes: namely, the nobles, the freemen, and the slaves. Of these, the latter, chiefly prisoners of war and their descendants, were left wholly unprotected. The law did not recognise the humanity of these unhappy men, but placed them in the same category with the inferior animals. The freemen, composed of citizens, farmers, landholders, and hired servants, were fenced in from the encroachments of the nobles. They were subdivided into centuries, each

of which elected its representative, or tribune, who, by virtue of his office, took equal rank with the boyards or nobles. The latter were regarded as the voyevodes, or military leaders of the state, and the direct counsellors of the prince. The hereditary rights of property were preserved unconditionally in their families alone. Thus arose a class of rich patricians, identified with the interests of property, while commerce and the popular privileges were represented in the assemblies of the elected representatives of the people. Here were the germs of a legislative system which, but for subsequent circumstances which swept over and extinguished them, might have ripened into a wise mode of government and a just social balance. It must be added, that the people paid no taxes for the support of their prince. His revenue was derived from the fines imposed for infractions of the law, from the tribute, in kind, which he received from the cultivators of his estates, and from the voluntary offerings of his subjects. The boyards did not pay taxes; their allegiance consisted in rendering military service when called upon to do so. The position of the grand prince was necessarily a difficult one, which could scarcely be filled except by a man of severe temper and of commanding will. The throne stood, as it were, in a plain surrounded by forests, from which frequently issued hordes of ruthless savages, whose violence threatened to overturn the dawning institutions of civilisation. Under such circumstances, it was a great matter to maintain any advance that had been made, and not again to recede into the darkness of barbaric life. It was, indeed, difficult to civilise barbarians surrounded by barbarians. The antipathy entertained towards the Greeks by the people was a great obstacle to their progress, as it extended itself to the arts, the sciences, and the manners introduced by these foreigners. Christianity, as being to a Russian mind essentially a Greek religion, bore some share of this dislike.

Very little is recorded of the reign of Yaroslaf; which circumstance, connected with his reputation for wisdom, leads to the inference that Russia enjoyed peace and prosperity under his sway. Towards the close of his life, he committed a serious error in abandoning the city of Novgorod to his son Vladimir. Scarcely had the latter ascended the throne of the once republican state, than, with all the ardour of a barbarian



in quest of plunder, he led an army into the Grecian empire, under pretence of obtaining satisfaction for the death of a Russian who had been killed there. The iniquity of this act elicited an appropriate but terrible retribution. Fifteen thousand of the invaders were left dead upon the plains of Greece, and the aggressor driven back with disgrace to his own dominions. Undeterred by the criminal folly of one of his sons, Yaroslaf, before his death, followed the evil example of his predecessors, and partitioned the whole of Russia amongst his sons, only ordaining that the younger ones should be subordinate to the eldest, who was authorised to reduce them to obedience by force of arms, should they exhibit a disposition to dispute his authority—of course, if he was powerful enough to do so. This arrangement, enforced by death-bed ad-

monitions, he trusted would sufficiently secure the empire from the afflictions of civil commotion and disputes concerning the succession. Such a confidence, placed in the fleeting honour of ambitious and greedy semi-barbarous princes, shakes our faith concerning his possession of that wisdom which the ancient chroniclers attribute to him. Often, however, the wise in one direction are guilty of folly in others; the purest golden ore is frequently found mingled with baser metals and with mire. Yaroslaf died in 1054, after a prolonged reign of thirty-four years. Before he had long lain in his grave, Russia became the prey of internal dissensions and of servile war; the fatal result of that partitioning of the empire which he had not the wisdom to foresee. This tragic error almost led to the dissolution of the infant empire.

---

## CHAPTER VI.

ISIASLAF SUCCEEDS TO THE GRAND PRINCEDOM; HE IS TWICE DRIVEN FROM THE THRONE, AND TWICE RESTORED TO IT BY THE POLES; THE LATTER RECALLED FROM KIEF BY THE INCONSTANCY OF THEIR WIVES; CONFUSION ARISING FROM THE WEAKNESS OF ISIASLAF; HIS DEATH; REVERSAL OF THE ORDER OF SUCCESSION; VSEVOLOD SUCCEEDS; IS FOLLOWED BY SVIATOPOLK; EXPULSION OF THE JEWS FROM RUSSIA. VLADIMIR MONOMACHUS CALLED TO THE THRONE; HE ARRESTS THE DECLINE OF THE STATE; HIS FAREWELL ADMONITION AND DEATH.

ISIASLAF I., the eldest of the five sons of Yaroslaf, succeeded as grand prince to the regal seat of Kief, which, from its magnificence and civilisation in comparison with the other important towns, had really become, in accordance with the words of Oleg, the mother, or chief, of Russian cities.

It is one matter to have a presumed authority over other princes, and quite a different one to maintain it. The wisest and most powerful sovereigns have been perplexed in such positions, and have commonly been compelled to enforce their claims with the sword. Isiaslaf was too feeble to preserve his paramount authority, and its bequeathment to him embittered his life and distracted the country. Ucheslaf, Prince of Polotsk, was the first of the brothers of Isiaslaf who set him at defiance. Nor did he stop at defiance: advancing with a well-disciplined army against Kief, he compelled the inhabitants to submit, and drove Isiaslaf

from his throne. The unfortunate prince sought the protection of Boleslas II., grand-duke of Poland, justly called the Bold, on account of his fearlessness and skill in war. Boleslas received the fugitive, to whom he was distantly connected by marriage, with sympathy, and at once adopted his cause. His ostensible motive was of the purest and most generous kind. "I am obliged to succour that prince," said he, "by the blood which unites us, and by the pity so justly due to his misfortunes. Unfortunate princes are more to be commiserated than ordinary mortals. If calamities must necessarily exist on earth, they should not be allowed to affect such as are exalted for the happiness of others."

This seeming nobility of conduct was, however, but a cover for feelings of a selfish character. His secret motive was the recovery of the possessions which his predecessors had held in Russia, and of the do-



mains he conceived he had a right to inherit through his mother and his queen, both of whom were Russian princesses.

Boleslas the Bold, therefore, entered Russia at the head of a numerous army inured to victory, and full of confidence in their leader, and advanced within a few leagues of Kief before he was opposed by Ucheslaf and his troops. Such was the martial appearance and undaunted mien of the Poles, that Ucheslaf's heart sank within him; and, quitting his tent secretly, he took to flight. He had not, however, proceeded far before he experienced the natural shame arising from the dishonourable course he was pursuing. He felt the inevitable conviction, that not only would his conduct lead to a loss of his dominions, but that it might also expose him to the vengeance of his betrayed and irritated followers. Collecting his resolution, he returned to the camp he had so shamefully abandoned, and gazed once more upon the formidable enemy arrayed against him. His dastard spirit could not bear the sight, and again he fled. His troops being without a leader and without a purpose, speedily dispersed, leaving Kief unprotected. The city was infested by the Poles, and no choice left to the inhabitants but to receive the late fugitive Isiaslaf as their prince. Polotsk followed the example of Kief, and submitted; but Ucheslaf, who had taken refuge there after his ignominious flight, contrived to escape.

Boleslas, though a brave soldier, was an abandoned sensualist. He and his troops remained some time at Kief, and gave themselves up to the pleasures of this comparatively polished city. During their stay, it was the scene of a continued round of profligacy. Fortunately for the Russians, the affairs of Boleslas demanded his presence in Hungary, whither he and his army departed, leaving Isiaslaf again in the possession of his throne and the dangerous claim to paramount authority bequeathed to him by his father.

For seven years Isiaslaf contended against his brothers and their kindred, who asserted unjust claims, or prosecuted predatory adventures. The spirits of contention, exaction, and misrule swept over the land like a triple pestilence; and the empire seemed abandoned to anarchy. At the end of the seven years, the unfortunate prince was again expelled from Kief by Vsevolod, a prince of one of the tributary fiefs. It would have been better if a sovereign so in-

capable of standing alone as Isiaslaf had shown himself to be, had accepted his fate, and reconciled himself to the tranquil security of private life. The annals of history do not record many instances of moral heroism of this kind; and certainly the again fugitive Prince of Kief did not possess it. He applied for aid to several European monarchs; and at length implored the interference of Pope Gregory VIII. The pope eagerly caught at an offer which he thought might ultimately lead to the transference of the faith of the Russian people from the Greek church to that of Rome; but he gave assistance in a second-hand and equivocal manner. In other words, he did nothing himself; but he instructed the Duke of Poland to support Isiaslaf to the utmost of his power. This Boleslas, actuated, as we have shown, by secret views of his own, consented to do. Necessarily, these selfish views rose in proportion to the urgency of the demand upon his services. This time, though he resolved to restore Isiaslaf to his throne, he was no less resolved to make him tributary to Poland. With this design, he speedily subjugated the whole of Volhynia, as a place of retreat in case he experienced a reverse of fortune. This done, he a second time marched against Kief. His progress was arrested by the forces of the reigning prince, Vsevolod, and a terrible battle ensued, in which the army of the latter was almost annihilated. Kief, however, was ably prepared for resistance. Well garrisoned and provisioned, it withstood his efforts; and he was obliged to subject it to the tedious process of a siege. As Boleslas was as impatient as he was valorous, he might have retired in consequence of this obstinate resistance, but that an unsought and unseen ally played into his hands. This was a contagious fever, which broke out amongst the inhabitants, and led them to open the gates in terror, that they might escape the effects of the pestilence. Just as the latter had exhausted itself, Boleslas poured in his troops; and the enfeebled citizens submitted with patience to a fate they could no longer avert. Thus was Isiaslaf restored to a throne from which he had been twice expelled. Boleslas acted with the generosity of a noble nature. Instead of incorporating the territories of Kief and its dependent provinces with his own dominions, he preferred leaving friends rather than enemies behind him; he merely exacted a tribute from these territories, and



caused himself to be acknowledged as sovereign paramount.

The generous and affable bearing of Boleslas soon rendered him a favourite with the people of Kief; and he and his companions plunged into a dissipation even exceeding their former revels in that city. His days were occupied in feasting and drinking, while his nights were devoted to the society of such of the frail ones of Kief as possessed more charms than virtue. His followers, down even to the humblest, soon imitated the conduct of their chief, and all ordinary business appeared superseded by the wild vortex of incessant sensuality, which drew both Poles and Russians into its debilitating embrace. The gratitude of Isiaslaf prompted him not to offer opposition to the desires of his restorer; but he sought to win him from the numerous debaucheries to which the Polish duke surrendered himself. Desiring, on one occasion, to obtain a visit from Boleslas, the Russian prince offered him as many marks of gold as his horse should take steps in making the journey from one residence to the other. The gift is said to have been one of a surprisingly liberal kind.

While the Poles were thus wallowing in the grossest sensuality at Kief, they received information which filled them with a violent desire to return to their homes, from which they had been absent in Russia and Hungary for the space of seven years. During this period, their wives and children had never seen them. The former, weary of their cheerless condition, which was worse than widowhood, forgot their chastity in their desolation, and submitted to the embraces of their slaves. A rage for these base amours seized the Polish women. Debauchery of this nature became the rule; and it is said that but one of the wives of the absent warriors had the virtue to refrain from it. This is probably an exaggeration; but a fashionable frenzy, in any direction, commonly overpowers every opposing feeling, and dominates alike over reason or honour. We shall not follow other writers in any cheaply virtuous indignation respecting the conduct of these unfortunate women; for men too often utter pompous rhapsodies in favour of a rigid chastity which they never observe. The Polish women, wounded by the evident indifference of their husbands, deprived of those social endearments and words of affection which enter so largely into the happiness of the fairer

sex, and incensed by the licentious conduct of their partners (rumours of which must have reached them), adopted the often-erring principle of *lex talionis*, and returned like for like. The Polish warriors, however, did not reflect on the provocations of their absence and their infidelity; and on hearing of this unexpected depravity on the part of their wives, they were distracted with shame and fury, and begged permission of their sovereign to return home. Actuated by a confidence in his queen, or entranced by the libidinous pleasures into which he was plunged at Kief, Boleslas, though he promised his troops that he would return, made no preparation for doing so. Many of his irritated followers lost all patience, and departed without his permission; and Boleslas was soon compelled, by this multitudinous desertion, to follow their example. When the Poles arrived at their homes, they found their slaves presiding at their boards, and in possession of all their privileges. In some instances they were resisted to the last extremity, and in others, they were pacified by submission and entreaties for pardon. Some of the women and their paramours fled, and others were put to death by the enraged husbands.

Isiaslaf, left without his protectors, soon showed his inability to use the authority bequeathed to him. The subordinate princes refused to recognise his supremacy, and separated themselves from the grand principedom. Fierce dissensions swept over the empire, which was rapidly falling to pieces, in consequence of the suicidal fury of contending governments. Such a state of things encouraged the hostile incursions of the barbarous nations and tribes that lay upon its borders. Poles, Hungarians, and Tartars swept like a pestilence over the Russian borders, and marked their track by burning villages, the women of which they had violated; while they put the men to death, or carried them away into slavery. The wretched Isiaslaf died in 1078, after a reign of twenty-four years.

The discord that existed did not perish with him, and even the order of succession was reversed. No ancient custom was respected; and the interests of the strong towered over the rights of the weak. Isiaslaf was not succeeded by his eldest son, but by his brother Vsevolod, who ascended the throne with the consent of the children of the deceased prince. Such a case was without precedent in Russia; for although the



warrior Oleg absolutely exercised the regal power during his life, he did so with the title of regent. But Vsevolod endeavoured to perpetuate the example he had introduced, by fixing the order of succession from brother to brother as the law of the land. He wore a tottering crown during a period of fifteen years. History is almost silent concerning him. It has been well remarked, that his reign is "an agitated canvas, in which the observer can discern nothing more than the chaos of the elements, with a single star of promise glittering distinctly in the person of the prince." He is most remembered on account of the virtues and wisdom of his son Vladimir Monomachus, in whose arms he breathed his last, and to whom he bequeathed the throne of Kief, in contravention of the very rule of succession he had himself introduced as law.

Vladimir, influenced by a noble self-denial, refused to accept the regal legacy. The peace of his country was dearer to him than personal honours and interests. To the entreaties of the citizens, he replied, he would not violate the recently established order of succession, which conferred the title and position of grand prince upon his cousin Sviatopolk. "His father," reasoned Vladimir, "was my father's senior, and reigned first in the capital. I wish to preserve Russia from the horrors of civil war."

Sviatopolk was a splenetic and feeble-minded prince, who not only owed the throne of Kief to the moderation of Vladimir, but was preserved in it solely by the wise counsels of the latter, which, nevertheless, he ventured frequently to disregard. The reign of Sviatopolk is as barren in incident as that of his predecessor, and is neglected alike by ancient chroniclers and modern historians. It appears to have been chiefly passed in fierce but uninteresting contentions between the rival Russian princes, each one of whom seems to have neglected his own territories, and turned all his attention towards seizing that of his neighbours. Sviatopolk died in 1113, after a reign of twenty years, leaving Kief and the Russian empire generally in a state of apparently inextricable disorder.

The death of Sviatopolk was followed by a savage outbreak of the citizens of Kief against the Jews. These unfortunate people having excited there a feeling of enmity, probably by the exhibition of a selfishly acquisitive temper, a cruel design was formed for a general massacre of them. Some, it

appears, fell victims to the popular fury; but it would seem that many of the citizens hesitated to slaughter unarmed men in cold blood; and Vladimir was appealed to to arrest the progress of the savage tumult. Order, however, was only restored by the expulsion of the Jews from the whole of the Russian territory—a banishment which endured for *six centuries*. Vladimir, though he could not save them from this doom, protected their retreat, and caused their exile to be respected.

Above all the clamour that shook the ancient city of Kief, there rose a wild demand that Vladimir Monomachus must now assume the sceptre, for that he was the only man who could restore tranquillity to the state. Again he refused. He maintained that the principedom was not elective, and that he was not the true heir to it according to the order of succession established by his dead father. As he appeared fixed in this resolution, the citizens broke into open revolt, and declared that they would not acknowledge any sovereign but the one they had elected. Vladimir now saw that further resistance would be merely irrational obstinacy, and tend to plunge the country still further into that anarchy from which he had sought so earnestly to save it.

The accession of Vladimir to the throne of Kief in 1114, gave a promise of coming peace, and a hope of again binding together, in a bond of union, the now discontented states of the empire. Such a work was, however, one both of time and difficulty, and Vladimir was in the fall of life. During the twelve years he bore the sceptre, he was occupied with those important but unobtrusive labours which, though of inestimable value, afford but a narrow theme for the historian. He appeased jealousies, satisfied conflicting claims, repressed disorderly passions, maintained justice, and restored confidence. To these labours he devoted himself with an efficiency which was not only appreciated by his subjects, but obtained for him the esteem of foreign courts. It even elicited from the Grecian emperor a compliment the most distinguished such a monarch could pay. Recognising in Vladimir a greatness of mind worthy of the noblest station, he sent him the ensigns of imperial dignity, as a sign that he considered him his equal.

Shortly before his death, Vladimir ameliorated the laws; softening the rigour of some, and rendering others more exact and



comprehensive. The last public act of his life was to leave a farewell admonition to his subjects or children, as he called them, which is interesting, as being illustrative of the habits and principles of one of the heroes of an age struggling slowly and laboriously from a barbarism which it was neither prepared to leave or to remain satisfied with. This testament appears derived from a remembrance of his own actions, and offered to his subjects as a guidance to theirs.

"My dear children," ran the document, "praise God and love men; for it is neither fasting nor solitude, nor monastic vows, that can give you eternal life; it is beneficence alone.

"Be fathers to the orphan; be yourselves judges for the widow. Put to death neither the innocent nor the guilty, for nothing is more sacred than the life and soul of a Christian.

"Keep not the priests at a distance from you; do good to them, that they may offer up prayers to God for you.

"Violate not the oath which you have sworn on the cross. My brothers said to me, 'Assist us to expel the sons of Rotislaf, and seize upon their provinces, or renounce our alliance.' But I answered, 'I cannot forget that I have kissed the cross.'

"Bear in mind that a man ought to be always employed: look carefully into your domestic concerns, and fly from drunkenness and debauchery.

"Love your wives, but do not suffer them to have any power over you.

"Endeavour constantly to obtain knowledge. Without having quitted his palace, my father spoke five languages; a thing which wins for us the admiration of foreigners.

"In war be vigilant; be an example to your boyards. Never retire to rest without having posted your guards. Never take off your arms while you are within reach of the enemy; and, to avoid ever being surprised, always be early on horseback.

"When you travel through your provinces, do not allow your attendants to do the least injury to the inhabitants. Entertain always, at your own expense, the master of the house in which you take up your abode.

"If you find yourself affected by any ailment, make three prostrations down to the ground before the Lord; and never let the sun find you in bed. At the dawn of day, my father, and the virtuous men by whom

he was surrounded, did thus: They glorified the Lord. They then seated themselves to deliberate, or to administer justice to the people, or they went to the chase; and in the middle of the day they slept; which God permits to man, as well as to the beasts and birds.

"For my part, I accustomed myself to do everything that I might have ordered my servants to do. Night and day, summer and winter, I was perpetually moving about. I wished to see everything with my own eyes. Never did I abandon the poor or the widow to the oppressions of the powerful. I made it my duty to inspect the churches and the sacred ceremonies of religion, as well as the management of my property, my stables, and the vultures and hawks of my hunting establishment.

"I have made eighty-three campaigns, and many expeditions. I concluded nineteen treaties with the Polovtzy. I took captive one hundred of their princes, whom I set free again; and I put two hundred of them to death, by throwing them into rivers.

"No one has ever travelled more rapidly than I have done. Setting out in the morning from Tchernigof, I have arrived at Kief before the hour of vespers.

"In my youth, what falls from my horse did I not experience! wounding my feet and my hands, and breaking my head against trees. But the Lord watched over me.

"In hunting, amidst the thickest forests, how many times have I myself caught wild horses, and bound them together! How many times have I been thrown down by buffaloes, wounded by the antlers of stags, and trodden under the feet of elks! A furious wild boar rent my sword from my baldrick; my saddle was torn to pieces by a bear; this terrible beast rushed upon my courser, whom he threw down upon me. But the Lord protected me.

"O, my children, fear neither death nor wild beasts. Trust in Providence; it far surpasses all human precautions."

The perusal of this experience of a wise and good barbarian (for we think that is the most appropriate description of this prince), leads back the imagination to an imperfect realisation of the country and state of society in which he lived. It shows us man yet dwelling on the borders of dense forests, and contending with beasts of prey for the possession of the soil. It shows cities enjoying peace, only in consequence



of the indolence or forbearance of hordes of barbarians, with whom war was an occupation and murder a revolting pastime. What promise-breaking and treachery is recorded by the simple fact, that the truthful Vladimir had to conclude nineteen different treaties with the Polovtzy Tartars; every one of which these human wolves broke through as soon as it suited their convenience to do so. What a revelation of their cruelty, also, is contained in the circumstance that this simple-minded prince, who shrunk from taking human life, was compelled to put 200 of these Tartar chiefs to death by drowning; a doom which their treachery and depravity no doubt justly deserved. It shows us Vladimir himself as a just, merciful, active, and, indeed, indefatigable ruler. Temperate, chaste, and industrious; in the latter respect a slave to duty. Earnestly pious, yet strongly impressed with what we may designate the coarse materialism of religious formula, rather than penetrated by a spirit of devout aspiration. There is something approaching even to the low idolatry of fetish worship in the superstition which dictated three prostrations before the Deity as the means of curing the ague or a fever. But Vladimir would, indeed, have been in advance of his time if he had recognised the important truth, that spiritual evils must be cured by spiritual remedies, and material evils by material remedies. A patient suffering from consumption or paralysis, does not apply to a clergyman for

aid; or a sinner, writhing under the pangs of an outraged and awakened conscience, proceed to a physician. In the first case, prayer is a secondary instrument of alleviation; in the second, the same may be said of medical attention. There is an odd simplicity, also, in the mode in which the good Vladimir connects the inspection of the churches and the management of his stables; but his evident good faith utterly exonerates him from intentional levity on a serious theme. His inoffensive vanity, too, in recording the trivial acts of his life—his fall from his horse, and his conflicts with stags, wild boars, and buffaloes—in a document addressed as a solemn admonition to his people, is amusing. Altogether, we should estimate Vladimir as a man of the purest integrity, a benevolent temper, and a mind considerably above the average of his countrymen, but not as one possessing genius for government. His well-known virtues caused men to have confidence in him; and that produced its natural results—tranquillity and a return in the direction of national prosperity. We say in the direction of national prosperity, for his rule was too brief to permit him to consolidate the noble work he had so happily begun. He died in 1125, after a reign of twelve years. He had been thrice married, and left five children behind him. Motislaf, the eldest, who succeeded him as grand prince, was the son of Gyda, daughter of Harold, the last Saxon king of England.

## CHAPTER VII.

PERIOD OF ANARCHY; IGOR OF SUZDAL; HIS SON ANDREW ATTEMPTS THE CONSOLIDATION OF RUSSIA; HE IS MURDERED; THE AGE OF WEAKNESS AND DARKNESS; GHENGIS KHAN AND THE TARTAR INVASION OF RUSSIA; BATOU AND HIS TARTAR HOST RAVAGE THE COUNTRY, AND PERPETRATE GREAT ATROCITIES; WHILE OCCUPIED IN MARCHING UPON NOVGOROD, THEY SUDDENLY TURN AND ABANDON RUSSIA.

ON the death of Vladimir Monomachus, Kiev and its dependent dominions commenced a backward motion to that state of confusion and decay from which he had partially rescued them. Motislaf, who inherited the virtues of his father, retained the broken sceptre during six years only; when his death gave the signal for a series of selfish struggles which exhausted the life-

blood of the country, and prepared it for that state of miserable and prolonged servitude which ensued. A period followed which partook of the nature of an interregnum. Government and the protection of the people was at an end, and the throne of Kiev was seized by an adventurer one year, who was displaced by another the next. History recoils from the wearisome task of



chronicling the contests, the murders, the treacheries, and the insane ambitions of these paltry actors in the tragedy of a country's ruin. It is sufficient to say, that in the course of thirty-two years, eleven princes mounted the tottering throne, which each forfeited directly another arose armed with sufficient power to tear it from him. A curse had fallen upon Kief; its streets ran with blood from the frequent contests between rival factions which took place in them. Its people were reduced to poverty; its soldiers became thieves and ruffians, wandering about in search of food and plunder; and its merchants trembled for the wealth which they scarcely dared employ in its natural channels. The neighbouring provinces were seized by whoever was strong or daring enough to grasp them; and the fields, once devoted to agriculture, were wasted by fire and sword. This state of things continued until the grand principality had dwindled to little more than the city of Kief. "Its paramount authority," said Ségur, "was nothing but a vain title; and yet, whether it arose from the influence of a name, or that it was still looked upon as the Capua, the Babylon of the Russians, the metropolis of their religion, the emporium of their commerce, the source of their civilisation, it is certain that all the anarchy of the princes continued to be obstinately bent against Kief; and the eye becomes bewildered in gazing upon the confusion."

One figure at length became the most prominent among the crowd of rulers whose fatal ambition had struck upon the heart of their country. This was Igor, the Prince of Suzdal, an immense territory, occupying the centre of Russia. But this vast appanage was to him only a source of discontent. His dominions, he said, were distinguished only by an inclement climate, uncultivated deserts, gloomy forests, and a people sunk in ignorance. This barbarian, therefore, longed to possess himself of the once polished but now humbled city of Kief, to which, at this gloomy period, might almost be applied the mournful language which the prophet Jeremiah uttered concerning the abject desolation of Jerusalem—"How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!"

Igor of Suzdal marched upon the distracted city of Kief, and the helpless citizens

surrendered to the power he brought with him. Seated upon a throne he had so easily acquired, the barbarian abandoned himself to an amount of riotous sensuality that speedily ended his worthless life. Such a mere warlike libertine would neither have deserved nor received notice, but for the perilous and important part afterwards played by his son, known as Andrew of Suzdal. This prince was not disposed to follow the example of his father, but remained, at least for a time, contented with his paternal dominions. "There," he observed, with the placid spirit of a philosopher, "still abide simplicity of manners, the obedience of the people, and the devoted fidelity of the boyards; while at Kief, a city which is on the frontier of the Hungarians, the Poles, and the Polovtzy, all is pillage, murder, servile and foreign war."

Remaining at home, Andrew devoted himself to the duties of the principality which had descended to him from inheritance; and there he frequently gave himself up to reflection upon the calamities of his country. Those calamities were still prolonged at Kief, which continued the prey of men whose ambition ever exceeded their power. Chief after chief entered its gates in petty triumph, rested for a brief time on the royal seat, and was as speedily ejected. Andrew at length saw the principal cause of the misery of Kief and the disunion of Russia. That cause was the partitioning the empire into separate governments, and the establishment of feudal principalities. Satisfied of the correctness of this important political truth, he determined to avoid, within his own territory, that error of which he saw so abundantly the fatal effects elsewhere. He therefore peremptorily abolished the system of granting territorial tracts, even to his relations and favourite boyards; and pronounced an opinion condemnatory of princes dividing their dominions into appanages for their sons. The wisdom of his conduct was soon apparent: Vladimir, his chief city, became worthy of being the Russian capital; Moscow, a town created by his father, rose into distinction; and a portion of the population of the south was attracted to his dominions, where they sought refuge from the horrors of war and confusion.

Andrew at length, lured from the unambitious simplicity of his early life, felt encouraged to attempt the regeneration and consolidation of Russia. As Kief declined,



Novgorod, the earliest Russian city, rose in prosperity. It had recently been admitted into the Hanseatic league, and was become the emporium of the commerce of the East. The bravery of its people maintained its independence, while the extent of its commercial transactions was a fertile source of continually increasing wealth. We have now to record what must be regarded as a dark stain upon the character of Andrew. Influenced by a base jealousy of the prosperity of Novgorod, which he was desirous should not eclipse Vladimir, the capital of his principality, he collected a powerful army, and advanced upon the former city. The motive appears an insufficient one, but it sprang from an ambitious self-love. Vladimir, he was resolved, should be the new capital of Russia; then it would be identified with his name and reputation, and must therefore stand unrivalled. To have raised it to an isolated elevation by securing its tranquillity, extending its commerce, encouraging the arts practised within it, and adorning it with noble buildings, would have been a lofty way of accomplishing this object; to weaken and humiliate a prosperous rival, was a dastardly and vile one.

His first expedition against Novgorod terminated in disgrace; his troops were opposed by the citizens with great intrepidity, and hurled back from the gates of the proud city. Disappointed in not being able to smite the powerful, he turned his arms against the weak, and led his beaten soldiers in an attack on the forlorn city of Kief. Against a dispirited foe they fought brutally and fiercely enough, and the city was taken by storm and rendered dependent upon this prince of yesterday, who had achieved victory without honour. The following year he again led an enormous army against Novgorod, and was again defeated by its spirited and hardy citizens! What he could not win from them by force of arms, he had, however, sufficient address to acquire by policy. We are told the Novgorodians saw the advantages of the system he proposed, and consented to acknowledge the supremacy of a prince whose principles of government seemed calculated to bind together the now severed appanages of the empire. We must confess to an incredulity that any arguments he could use would be likely to produce so remarkable an effect. Perhaps his gold, judiciously administered to the chiefs of Novgorod, removed difficulties his

sword could not hew down. However this may be, he was now acknowledged as occupying the throne of the grand principedom.

Andrew's success induced him to depart still further from the moderation and wisdom of his youth, and to push forward his scheme of consolidation with a dangerous rapidity. Great works, if intended for endurance, must not be suddenly or violently accomplished. That which is hastily constructed is often even more rapidly demolished. Man, the most highly organised of animals, is the slowest in arriving at maturity; while it is computed that a thousand years must elapse before the soft and comparatively worthless charcoal becomes, by the subtle chemistry of nature, transmuted into the hard and dazzling diamond. Thus, with governments and peoples, unnaturally hasty reforms are followed by an inevitable reaction, which plunges them back still further into the darkness from which an effort was made to emerge. Andrew's design embraced the subjection of every independent prince, each of whom then began to regard him with suspicion and hatred. It was his interest to destroy that which it was theirs to maintain. Each prince had boyards and troops dependent upon him, and was necessarily more or less formidable. One principality after another revolted against the authority of the grand prince; and the people so disliked the new system, that they were ever ready to take to arms at the call of their leaders.

Andrew's authority, beyond his own appanage, soon extended only where he could enforce it with his sword. Not only did he refuse districts to his own kindred, but even banished some of them for their resistance to his will. His authority declined; and the troops he once employed to reduce refractory princes, were now occupied in fencing in his own immediate dominions from attack. Kief and Novgorod, taking advantage of the weakness of the man who had humbled them, declared themselves independent of his authority. The example was followed by other cities; and the flame of insurrection at last made its appearance in Andrew's own capital of Vladimir. The result may be conjectured: in 1174, six years after his first descent upon Novgorod, the grand prince was murdered by his own subjects. He had committed the common error of ambitious princes—that of undertaking tasks beyond their strength to accomplish, and then urging them forward



with a blind, unreasoning energy. Had Andrew possessed the integrity and self-denial of the good Vladimir Monomachus, he might have been regarded as an illustrious reformer. But he lacked the patient perseverance of the true hero, and his efforts were corrupted by selfishness. When he thought he was serving his country, he was, perhaps unconsciously, bent on exalting himself. The selfish nature does not recognise its own vice, and so Andrew might not see the obstacle that lay in his path. The subordinate princes would naturally exclaim, "Who is this man, that we should surrender our rights and interests to *him*?" Necessarily, he was not identical, in their minds, with Russia. They did not esteem him as essential to binding up the wounds of the empire. His claim to the grand principedom was only a usurped one; right he had none. Any other powerful prince might exclaim, "Why not *I* as well as this man of yesterday?" If Andrew had proposed his theory for the regeneration of the country, and offered, at a convention of the princes, to support it in the person of another, that would have been the act of a hero. As it was, he resolved on beating down, with an iron hand, all opposition to a plan for the execution of which he had not obtained the consent of those whose interests were affected by it—that was the part of a despot. In the hardness of a selfish and wrong-headed will, he adopted the least noble course; and the harvest he reaped was the natural fruit of the seed he sowed. Some writers have recorded his assassination in the language of pity: we waste no emotion on any such event; but regard it as the inevitable result of natural law!

The successors of Andrew abandoned a design at once so difficult and unpopular. They even followed the old practice of subdividing their dominions, and thus promoted the impending ruin of the state. The prince who first succeeded Andrew parcelled out the dominions of Suzdal into inferior appanages; the next permitted a dependent to dispute with him his title to the sovereignty; while the third released the tributary princes from the obligation of their recognition of his power as their superior lord, and declared that they were not responsible to him, but only accountable for their trusts to God.

\* His real name was Temugin; but he discarded it when barbarous victories over opponents had conferred power upon him. His birth was noble; but, in

The Russian empire now no longer existed, and anarchy prevailed throughout the north of Europe. Government, commerce, and civilisation were alike becoming rapidly extinct. The population of the borders sought the protection of the neighbouring states; while their room was supplied by the barbarian vagabondage that swept over tracts which yielded but little to the plunderer. Russia was ripe for bondage, and its doom was at hand.

Ghengis, or Zingis Khan, whose adopted name\* signified the "most great," and who boasted of a divine right to the conquest and dominion of the whole earth, having laid Asia at his feet, now turned his eyes upon the adjoining continent of Europe. This fearful barbarian, who, according to the calculation of oriental historians, had destroyed in the East no less than five millions of human beings, was the son of a Mogul chief, who reigned over thirty or forty thousand families of shepherd-warriors. Ghengis, by the aid of craft, bravery, and superstition, contrived to get himself proclaimed Great Khan, or emperor of the Moguls and Tartars. As the savage race who followed Ghengis are inseparably interwoven with the next period of Russian history, we will quote from the well-digested pages of Gibbon a sketch of these scourges of the earth. To our mind the colours employed are too favourable (the historian, disgusted with the vices of civilisation, looked with a too lenient eye upon the atrocities of barbarism); but an antidote will be supplied to this error by the subsequent and painful facts we have to relate.—"The code of laws which Zingis dictated to his subjects was adopted to the preservation of domestic peace, and the exercise of foreign hostility. The punishment of death was inflicted on the crimes of adultery, murder, perjury, and the capital thefts of a horse or ox; and the fiercest of men were mild and just in their intercourse with each other. The future election of the Great Khan was vested in the princes of his family and the heads of the tribes; and the regulations of the chase were essential to the pleasures and plenty of a Tartar camp. The victorious nation were held sacred from all servile labours, which were abandoned to slaves and strangers; and every labour was servile except the profession of arms. The service and discipline

the pride of triumph, he or his people declared that his seventh ancestor was born from the immaculate conception of a virgin.



of the troops, who were armed with bows, scimitars, and iron maces, and divided by hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands, were the institutions of a veteran commander. Each officer and soldier was made responsible, under pain of death, for the safety and honour of his companions; and the spirit of conquest breathed in the law, that peace should never be granted unless to a vanquished and suppliant enemy. But it is the religion of Zingis that best deserves our wonder and applause.\* The catholic inquisitors of Europe might have been confounded by the example of a barbarian who anticipated the lessons of philosophy, and established by his laws a system of pure theism and perfect toleration. His first and only article of faith was the existence of one God, the author of all good; who fills by his presence the heavens and the earth, which he has created by his power. The Tartars and Moguls were addicted to the idols of their peculiar tribes; and many of them had been converted by the foreign missionaries to the religions of Moses, of Mohammed, and of Christ. These various systems, in freedom and concord, were taught and practised within the precincts of the same camp; and the Bonze, the Iman, the Rabbi, the Nestorian, and the Latin priest, enjoyed the same honourable exemption from service and tribute. In the mosque of Bochara, the insolent victor might trample the Koran under his horse's feet; but the calm legislator respected the prophets and pontiffs of the most hostile sect. The reason of Zingis was not informed by books; the khan could neither read nor write; and, except the tribe of the Ingours, the greatest part of the Moguls and Tartars were as illiterate as their sovereign. The memory of their exploits was preserved by tradition; and sixty-eight years after the death of Zingis, these traditions were collected and transcribed."

The first descent of the Tartars and Moguls upon Russia took place in 1221; but the information we possess concerning it, is both meagre and contradictory. It was conducted not by Ghengis himself, but by a son of that formidable barbarian, named Joodgee Khan. The invaders made themselves masters of the Caucasus, the rich

valleys of the river Ural, and swept over and destroyed many Russian towns and villages. After this they retired, leaving the startled Russians astonished at the seemingly almost supernatural visitation. It was not until 1223 that the Tartars again made their appearance. Then, traversing the shores of the Caspian Sea, they reached the river Dnieper, and subdued the Circassians who dwelt there. The latter had united with the Polovtzy, for the sake of opposing their common enemy. But the Tartars, whose craft was nearly equal to their ferocity, separated them by bribes, and then defeated them singly. Had Russia been united under one head, it might have successfully resisted the hordes of barbarians that fell upon it; but the insane discord of its princes betrayed their country to the enemy. Still they were aroused from their apathy by alarm, and appear to have made some overtures for a union, for their common protection. The wily Tartars, who always sought rather to slaughter their victims than encounter them fairly, resorted to the arts of intrigue, to prevent the junction of those Russian princes whose forces, taken singly, would fall by their swords like ripe wheat before the sickle of the reaper. With this treacherous object, they even sent ambassadors into Russia with instructions to offer terms of alliance and friendship. These barbarian diplomatists met the fate they deserved, though its infliction was extremely impolitic. The Russian princes saw through the snare; and, feeling convinced that the enemy was not to be bound by oaths and treaties, they, in a moment of exasperation, put the Tartar ambassadors to death, and then prepared for hostilities.

The act was both a crime and a mistake. Unless the person of an ambassador is held secure from injury or insult, all communication between hostile forces must necessarily terminate. These murders were, moreover, a serious error, because they gave the Tartars and Moguls an excuse for the ravages of war and the attempt at conquest. Even in this hour of common danger, the Russian princes, though both their country and themselves stood on the verge of destruction, could not subdue their mutual

\* Scarcely so, we think, if it is to be estimated by the conduct of the Mogul conqueror and his army of butchers. But this does not seem to have been guided by any bonds of religion or morality; and the historian alludes to his speculative opinions. Such men, or monsters, as Ghengis Khan, may be in-

fluenced by superstition, but can scarcely be said to possess a religion. We know of none—Pagan, Boodist, Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan, Deist, or Pantheist—that does not recognise *moral duties* as a sequel to religious faith; necessarily including self-denial and forbearance.



jealousies. They were still unwilling to co-operate, and their troops were for the most part disorganised and worn out by domestic contentions. The Tartars were not slow to avail themselves of this advantage, and the Russians were defeated with great slaughter on the banks of the Kalka, near the mouth of the Don. While the forces of the Prince of Galitsh were being thrown into confusion and beaten down by their adversaries, those of the Prince of Kief stood aloof, and looked with indifference, or with secret satisfaction, at the carnage which was proceeding. His malicious and idiotic gratification was of very brief duration; the enemy having destroyed his rival, soon trampled him and his forces beneath their victorious feet. After the battle, the Tartars entered the country, and ravaged the whole of its southern side; and then, leaving it a desert, withdrew their armies.

Thirteen years elapsed before these scourges of humanity reappeared. During this period the Russian princes remained inactive, and neglected to fortify the vulnerable points of approach, or to concert together means of defence against the terrible enemy who might at any time return. The princes could not abandon their dissensions; and the people in the border districts seemed passive and bewildered, like men exposed to a fate against which it was useless to struggle. Other afflictions, of a no less appalling character, also fell upon the unhappy land; and a famine, a plague, and an earthquake, added to the horrors which racked it. The measure of its woe seemed full; and yet, even in these times of terror and darkness, when the night of history seemed descending with a starless and profound blackness upon Russia, and the grave of empires seemed yawning for a yet infant though decrepid state, a greater woe was to come!

Batou, a grandson of Ghengis Khan, with a force said to consist of 500,000 Tartars and Moguls, had started on a great expedition of conquest and destruction, bent on accomplishing what the family of Ghengis affected to consider the conquest and punishment of the whole earth. In 1237 Batou fell upon the Bulgarians, the immediate neighbours of the Russians, who naturally applied to the latter for assistance. It is astonishing that it was not granted at whatever sacrifice! Such, however, was the fact; a selfish policy prevailed in the counsels of the Russian princes, and they declined to assist the Bulgarians. Yet the

grand prince of Vladimir, in this time of probable national extinction, occupied himself in adorning the churches, bestowing alms on beggars, and purchasing the prayers of monks. So buried was he in the barren formularies of his religion, that he had no time for the performance of secular duties.

When Batou and his hordes had vanquished the Bulgarians, and wasted their country with fire and sword, they entered Russia. The latter appeared almost too exhausted for resistance. The principality of Riazan fell at the approach of the Tartars; and, in many places, the people came forth and surrendered themselves to the invaders, in the hope of thus obtaining a merciful treatment. In this anticipation they were fatally deceived. The brutal habits, and the almost entirely carnivorous diet of the shepherd-soldiers, had closed their hearts to the approach of compassion. The sentiment of pity is imperceptibly weakened by the sight and practice of domestic cruelty. Those horrid objects which are disguised by the arts of European refinement, were exhibited in their most naked and disgusting simplicity in the tent of a Tartar shepherd. The ox or the sheep were slaughtered by the same hand from which they were accustomed to receive their daily food, and the bleeding limbs were served, with very little preparation, on the table of the unfeeling slaughterman. As the wandering habits of these hordes did not permit of the pursuit of agricultural arts, their food consisted, therefore, almost entirely of milk and of flesh in the state to which we have alluded. Such a diet, and a life spent in war, gradually converted the natural man into a ferocious creature, more akin to the brute than to the human race.

We are, therefore, prepared to believe that much cruelty was committed by the Tartars on the submissive people who sought to win their pity. Even then, reality outstrips imagination. Mercy was an emotion unknown to the Tartars; and they committed the most revolting atrocities on men and women, age and infancy. All men capable of bearing arms were butchered in cold blood, and young girls and children were tortured before the eyes of their agonised parents. Plunder, violation, and carnage succeeded each other; and when a town or village had been rendered little more than a collection of open sepulchres, the Tartars gave the houses to the flames or razed them to the earth. They only re-



quired hunting-grounds. They dwelt in rude tents, and had no need of cities; therefore they would not spare what might become the nucleus of an armed population, and, perhaps in time, an instrument of retribution. When unable to obtain admission into a fortified town, they promised safety to the inhabitants if they would submit; and when, by this means, they had obtained an entrance, they immediately violated their promises, and put the deceived Russians to death. Indeed, the particulars of their progress is an awful catalogue of all that is wanton and revolting in crime; all that is appallingly refined in cruelty. One is tempted—we trust not irreverently—to wonder that the wrath of the Almighty was not aroused to manifest itself by some miraculous deed of retribution, in which the destroying angel should have smitten dead every one of that vast horde of treacherous assassins and torturers!

The Prince of Riazan, compelled to abandon his principality to the ravages of the foe, solicited the assistance of Yury, the grand prince of Vladimir; but this monk-like simpleton was still busy painting churches, testing the sound of bells, and buying the prayers of his retinue of priests with gold. The application was made too late; the small force that circumstances permitted him to send was totally inadequate to perform the gigantic task required at their hands. The unhappy men were massacred by the Tartars, and Riazan left in flames. Onward, like a surging torrent, went the dark tide of invasion and murder. Town after town fell before the hosts of human fiends; and in each were perpetrated many of those terrible tragedies of which we have already spoken. Soon the country was laid waste up to the very gates of the city of Vladimir. Yury, finding it necessary now to adopt some stringent measures, and being utterly unequal to the task, confided the defence of the city to one of his chieftains, and then sought his own safety by retiring to a fortified camp on the banks of the river Sit.

The inhabitants of Vladimir had lost all confidence in themselves, and were paralysed with fear in consequence of the presence of Tartars before their walls. The officer to whom the command of the city had been entrusted shared the general feeling of dread; and the inhabitants, abandoning themselves to terror, neglected all

rational means of defence, and, crowding to the churches and the sanctuaries, prostrated themselves before the images of the saints, and implored assistance. Many, looking upon death as inevitable, embraced some holy order, and, entering the cells of some house devoted to the services of religion, resolved to die at least in the exercise of their faith.

The Tartars soon discovered the abject state of their victims, whom they accordingly despised for cowardice. A party of them having scaled the walls almost without resistance, opened the gates to their countrymen, who rushed in, and, with an almost incredible thirst for blood, slaughtered every person they found. It is actually said, that not one Russian survived the massacre. The wife and two sons of Yury were among the victims; the former, together with her attendant ladies, being massacred on the steps of the sacred altar, to which they had fled in the vain hope that within its shadow they would be secure from the murderers. While yet reeking with the blood of those whom they had slain so remorselessly, the Tartars set Vladimir on fire, and left it the mere blackened and crumbling skeleton of a city. This atrocity was perpetrated in the February of 1238. The phlegmatic Yury was roused at last; but it was now too late. He awaited the Tartars in his fortified position, where, early in the following month, he was attacked by overwhelming forces, and fought bravely, until he was slain in the heat of the battle. His scanty band of followers were annihilated by their ruthless foes.

After a brief rest, Batou and the Tartar host directed their steps towards Novgorod; but, when within sixty miles of the city, they suddenly halted and retraced their steps. Whether the climate was not agreeable to them, or they were wearied with long marches in a country which did not repay the toil of conquest, is unknown. Many of the Russians attributed the deliverance to the intercessions of their favourite saints. Certain, however, is it, that turning their backs upon Novgorod, they abandoned the empire. During their progress they had destroyed fourteen fortified cities, and a great number of inferior towns and scattered villages. Those whom they put to death have been so variously estimated, that no confidence can be placed in any of the statements.



## CHAPTER VIII.

REAPPEARANCE OF THE TARTARS; AFTER DESOLATING A PART OF RUSSIA, THEY CARRY THEIR ARMS INTO POLAND AND HUNGARY; THEY RETURN TO RUSSIA, WHERE THEIR CHIEF, BATOU, ESTABLISHES A GOVERNMENT ON THE BANKS OF THE VOLGA, UNDER THE NAME OF THE GOLDEN HORDE; THE TARTAR POLICY; MEANNESS AND WEAKNESS OF THE RUSSIAN PRINCES; RISE OF ALEXANDER NEVSKY; RESISTANCE TO THE TARTAR TAX-GATHERERS; DEATH OF ALEXANDER; EXECUTION OF THE GRAND PRINCE.

THE respite of the unhappy people of Russia was but a brief one. Early in 1240, Batou and his Tartar hordes again made their appearance. Such was the terror with which they were regarded, that the inhabitants fled at their approach, and sought for safety in hiding-places and remote retreats. Batou passed through a solitude of deserted towns and villages; and his fierce barbarians, disappointed in their thirst for blood, gave the silent habitations to the flames. The fortress of Kief, which was strongly built and well garrisoned, resisted the invaders for a time. It was defended by a fearless and experienced officer, who repelled the first assaults of the Tartars with great intrepidity. But the contest was too unequal for continuance, and their number too great to be long withstood. With one tremendous assault they broke through the defences; and, having obtained an entrance into the city, commenced their usual work of slaughter and destruction. Having reduced Kief to heaps of blackened and smouldering ruins, between which stood the charred walls of palaces and churches, they deliberated upon some more than usually cruel way of putting to death the Russian officer who had resisted them. Yet such was the dignified and fearless bearing of this man, that it won respect even from the barbarian Batou; who spared his life, and even admitted him to his confidence. The Russian represented to the Tartar chieftain, that the country was so impoverished that scarcely anything was to be gained by a prosecution of the war. With a view of getting rid of the aggressor, he also pointed out Poland and Hungary, which had been accumulating wealth during a long interval of comparative repose, as fields where far more abundant spoil could be obtained.

Batou was convinced; and, abandoning Kief, he and his vast army forced a passage into Poland. Its king, Boleslas V., struck with terror, fled into Hungary; and, when danger approached that country, retreated

to a monastery in the heart of Moravia. Poland, rent by domestic factions, became an easy prey to the invaders. Its towns were taken and destroyed; its rivers stained with the blood of its people; and its fields desolated. Some of the Polish nobles made a resolute stand, but they were crushed by the overwhelming numbers of their foes. After the battle of Lignitz, in which the dukes of Silesia, the Polish palatines, and the Teutonic knights were defeated, the Tartars filled nine sacks with the right ears of the slain. Thence the mighty tide of barbarism rolled forward into Hungary, which fell before their fury; cities and towns were given to the flames, and the soil whitened by the bones of its inhabitants. Such was the savage insolence of the Tartars, that they assigned but eighteen years for the conquest of Europe! The Roman pontiff made an attempt to soften and convert these barbarians by a mission of Franciscan and Dominican friars; but Batou fiercely replied, that the sons of God and of Ghengis were invested with a divine power to subdue or extirpate the nations, and that the pope would be involved in the universal destruction, unless he visited in person, and as a suppliant, the royal Horde.

On his return from Poland and Hungary, Batou settled on the banks of the river Volga. Having declared himself independent of the parent authority, he here established the empire of the khans of Kaptshak, or the Golden Horde; a name derived from the gorgeous tapestry and sumptuous appearance of the tent of the Tartar prince. Russia, as an independent state, no longer existed; all its principalities were subjected to the iron supremacy of the Tartar khan. The Russian princes could only purchase peace by a humble attendance, with tribute, at the Golden Horde, where they were also compelled to submit to ceremonies of the most humiliating kind. The Horde, forming but one of five divisions of the empire of the Mogul Tartars, derived its subsistence



from the revenues it extorted from the Russians. Its power, as will be seen, was preserved by a mixture of craft and cruelty.

It was part of the Tartar policy to weaken and humiliate the Russian princes, probably that no patriot should arise from among them and succeed in throwing off the oppressive yoke they were made to bear. The Russian people had been reduced to such a state of national prostration, that they were no longer able to drive back the border nations, who at intervals poured in upon their desolated districts; and, in their misery, they were compelled to look even to the khan for protection from the Lithuanians, the Swedes, the Livonians, the Poles, and the Hungarians. The Tartars, also, encouraged that tendency to religious observances which despair had engendered in the Russian people. This they did with the subtle intention of gradually weaning the latter from warlike habits, and making them submit passively to the exactions of a grinding and insulting tyranny. With this view they conferred honours on the church, and increased its revenues, while they used it as an instrument for effeminating the people. So far did they carry this assumed respect, that they condescended to listen to the petitions of metropolitans and bishops; while similar applications, on the part of princes, were disdainfully rejected. Sacrilege they punished with death; and they released the ecclesiastical domains from the payment of taxes, either to themselves or to the native princes. The influence of the church thus became very great; the disheartened Russian nobles retired to its cloisters to spend the close of their lives, and enriched its revenues with their property. A pious resignation to calamity became general: Russians acquired a habit of leaving their property to the church; while numbers of the wealthy devoted their means to the erection of religious houses; so that, eventually, it came to be observed, that more churches and monasteries were built during the sway of the Tartars than at any other period of Russian history. In no other point of domestic government did the Tartars think it worth their while to interfere. They were satisfied with having degraded the princes by an inordinate patronage of the church, and of reducing the former to puppets; while the latter, seemingly honoured as it was, only existed by their forbearance.

Russia had still a grand prince, although

his dignity was but a name, and his authority a delusion. This was Yaroslaf, who, on the death of his brother Yury, had resigned Novgorod to his son, and taken possession of the principality and ruined city of Vladimir. Though the empty title of grand prince attached to this locality, yet Yaroslaf could not obtain permission to assume it, without first paying a large sum to the avaricious Batou. By the means of lavish bribes he obtained the indulgence he sought, and was nominated grand prince, on condition that he acknowledged the khan of Kaptshak as his feudal lord, and the supreme or head khan of all the Tartar hordes as his sovereign in chief. His hollow dignity only provoked the jealousy of his fellow-princes, who, irritated at his selfishness, refused to acknowledge his sovereignty. They would even have made war upon him, but that they feared he would be supported by the power of the khan. Sooner than acknowledge the paramount authority of Yaroslaf, the princes voluntarily tendered their obedience to the Tartars! The word of the khan settled all disputes as to territory and other matters, and from his decision there was no appeal. Each prince strove to win the favour of the Tartar chief by bribes; and all of them earned his contempt, by their base endeavours to induce him to place them in the seat of the grand principedom instead of Yaroslaf. It is impossible to bestow even a passing thought of pity upon these unprincipled men, whose insolent despotism and cruelty in prosperity, was only to be equalled by their abject humility and greediness in adversity. Not one of them seems to have been actuated by an active sense of patriotism; country to them was but as the quivering carcase whose scarcely lifeless limbs are torn asunder by a horde of wolves. National spirit seemed for a time extinct in the Russian princes and nobles; the highest dignity of manhood appeared crushed beneath the starless darkness of a stifling tyranny; and, for a while, nothing remained but the meanness of abject minds and the weakness of helpless ones.

The terrible desolation inflicted by the Tartars had caused the little land that had been placed under cultivation to remain a desert; and now a series of famines added to the calamities of the people. Border nations also proceeded to appropriate to themselves portions of the territory of a people who seemed incapable of defending themselves. Amongst these ungenerous foes who warred



upon misery, were the Swedes, Danes, and Livonians, who made preparations for a descent upon Novgorod. This ancient city had not been reached by the Tartars, and had suffered comparatively little from the calamities that had fallen on the rest of Russia. Something of the ancient spirit yet remained among its people; and at the call of their prince, Alexander, they prepared to resist the march of the intruders. All difficult emergencies require men of decision and strength of character to grapple with them. Alexander was a man of this kind. Without waiting for an assistance which the grand prince was unable to afford, he collected an army, and, marching out of the city, met his advancing foes on the banks of the Neva, where, after a fierce contest, he gained a decisive victory. Erecting strong forts on the spot to check future aggression, he returned in triumph to Novgorod, where his delighted people bestowed upon him the name of Nevsky, in commemoration of his victory on the banks of the Neva.

Alexander Nevsky was but in the early summer of life, and consequently easily accessible to the dangerous promptings of ambition. The attachment evinced towards him by his army, and the honours offered by his people, made him desirous of extending his dominions. Novgorod, though governed by a prince, still retained much of its original republican character and mode of administration. Its citizens enjoyed a proud exclusiveness. They had a strong antipathy to be mixed with the people of neighbouring principalities, and being also apprehensive that their prince might abuse his advantages, they vehemently opposed his design of territorial extension. Finding their remonstrances disregarded, they at length broke into open rebellion, and Alexander retired in disgust from the city, and proceeded to Novgorod, where he begged from his father a sufficient force to enable him to chastise his refractory subjects. Yaroslaf wisely refused the mad request, and appointing another of his sons to rule over Novgorod, conferred upon Alexander the inferior principality of Pereislaf.

This state of things did not last long. The new prince soon demonstrated his incapability of defending Novgorod from those attacks which were encouraged by the absence of Alexander. The citizens implored the latter to return to them and resume the reins of government. At first he refused indignantly; but he yielded to

the entreaties of a second deputation. Taking up arms, he was again victorious against the invaders of his country, whom he assailed in their turn, and defeated them so decisively that his reputation spread throughout Russia, and even elicited the real or assumed approbation of the Golden Horde.

Yaroslaf, the titular grand prince of Russia, went to an inglorious tomb in 1246, on which occasion the Tartar khan summoned Alexander to make his appearance at the Golden Horde. The young soldier obeyed; and there he met many of the Russian princes, contending against each other with valuable offerings for the favour of the khan, and each hoping to obtain from him the empty dignity of grand prince. Alexander would not solicit a title to which he felt he had a right not possessed by any of the selfish triflers by whom he was surrounded. His frank and fearless manner elicited the admiration of the khan, who treated him with unusual respect. But the Tartar chief was anxious to show his power, and to keep the order of succession to the grand principedom in a state of uncertainty; therefore it was not until Alexander made a second journey to the Golden Horde, in 1252, that that dignity was conferred upon him.

On attaining this new title, Alexander led an expedition into Sweden, chiefly with the object of inflicting chastisement upon a foe who seemed ever ready to harass his frontier districts. Success attended his arms, and he returned home laden with prisoners, spoil, and trophies. Such was his military talent that, added to the favourable impression he had made upon the khan, it raised the grand principedom to an actual dignity. When dissensions arose amongst the princes, and they sought the adjudication of the khan, he either referred the adjustment of their differences to Alexander, or confiscated their dominions and annexed them to the grand principedom. The princes of Kiev and Vladimir, probably influenced by some agents of the pope, signified their submission to that potentate, and their adoption of the Roman religion. This fickleness was offensive to the khan, who patronised the Greek church; and, in his anger, immediately deprived them of their territories, which, also, he bestowed upon the favoured grand prince.

Hitherto the khan had been satisfied by receiving from each of the princes a large



sum as tribute money, which he left them to collect from their subjects in the way most in consonance with their feelings. Now, however, he adopted a more stringent method, and appointed Tartar officers to collect a tax imposed upon every Russian according to his means, with the exception of the clergy. This burden, in the shape of direct taxation by a foreign power, was heavily felt, and produced great discontent among the people. The Tartar tax-gatherers were regarded with aversion, and, in some places, even received with execration. Resistance produced increased severity on their part. A spirit of opposition led to one of insurrection, in which the citizens of Novgorod took the lead by refusing to pay the tax, and threatened with death those who were appointed to collect it. The city was now governed by one of Alexander's sons, who sanctioned this outbreak of popular feeling. The grand prince, knowing that neither the people of Novgorod, nor those of any other part of the Russian dominions, were able to resist the power of the khan, hurried to Novgorod to appease the tumult. Rebuking the citizens for having perilled the safety of the country, he punished the advisers of his son, and arranged the payment of the tax, to the satisfaction of the Tartar collectors. Still the people were discontented, on account of the inequality of the tax; nor could Alexander pacify them, until he personally undertook the responsibility of the payment.

Novgorod was no sooner tranquillised than the spirit of resistance broke out elsewhere. The despotic insolence of the Tartar tax-gatherers provoked retaliation from the Russians, who sometimes drove them from their cities, and at others put them to death. Such events necessarily came to the ears of the khan, who resolved on at once crushing the insubordination by a terrible example. To accomplish his vengeance, he craftily summoned all the Russian princes to appear before him at the head of their troops, saying that he required their aid for a distant campaign he was about to undertake. His real object was to sweep over the land with his barbarians, during the absence of its armed population. Alexander detected the treachery, and he resolved to go alone to the Horde, and, at the risk of exciting the anger of the khan, endeavour to avert his vengeance. On arriving there, he was treated with great contumely by the Tartar chieftains. Persevering in his patriotic en-

deavours, he remained a whole year at the Horde, before he was able to appease the wrath of the khan. Then he was allowed to return home, with a promise that the Tartar prince would forgive the insubordination of the Russians, and abandon his designs of vengeance. He set out on his return to his dominions in the year 1264; but he had not proceeded far before he expired suddenly upon the road. His death is attributed to poison, administered by the Tartars, who had become jealous of the great influence he had acquired over his countrymen. The Tartars, in dealing with their enemies, recognised no obligations either of honour, religion, or humanity. They were butchers in practice, Jesuits in principle, and resorted to the profoundest dissimulation in cases where they deemed open violence to be injudicious or dangerous. On subsequent occasions, also, they administered poison to some of the Russian princes whom they wished to remove. A modern writer has acutely observed of these Tartar oppressors, that "the system of open outrage had been gradually abandoned as the sphere of their settled possessions became determined. The excuse for putting the vassal princes to death, which a war of extermination yielded, no longer existed; and they could not hope to maintain their authority in Russia without an enormous expenditure of blood, and an incessant appeal to arms, unless they observed some external respect for the forms of justice. Other causes, too, had imperceptibly diminished the passion for slaughter which marked their predatory mode of life. A love of luxury was springing up amongst them. The change from a roving, marauding, and wild state, to that of permanent location, brought with it a corresponding desire for ease, and a cultivation of luxurious habits. Public breaches of good faith would have been attended with vexatious consequences and endless disturbance; and it is likely that, in such a frame of mind, the Tartars preferred the secret assassination, which entailed no results, to the open murder of the Russian princes, which must have produced an attempt at retaliation."

To the memory of Alexander Nevsky must be accorded the painful honour, that he was the only distinguished Russian patriot of his time. Amongst a crowd of worthless princes he stands alone, as a man who often risked, and finally lost his life, in an endeavour to raise the depressed energies



of his country. A wise statesman, and a gifted soldier, his rule was distinguished alike by victories abroad and improvements at home. Had the jealousy of the Russian princes permitted them to acknowledge him as their superior sovereign, and to serve under his command with all the forces they could raise, the oppressive sway of the Tartars might have been broken, and the independence of Russia restored. But the petty dissensions of a class which had brought upon the country the curse of a foreign yoke, now prevented it from rising from the dust, and again taking its place among the nations. Alexander, however, was deeply mourned by the people, who felt that a great one had departed from them. So impressed were men's minds with his death, that supernatural events were believed to have accompanied it. It was said, that the approaching decease of the grand prince was announced to the metropolitan by a voice from heaven; and that, while the body lay in the coffin, the dead man opened one of his hands as the prayer of absolution was spoken over him. Such narrations, false and puerile as they may seem to us, are not to be regarded as idle inventions. In times of national calamity, marvellous tales arise from the mind-mists of popular superstition and ignorance, as new and strange births are supposed to have done from the reeking slime of an infant world. The circumstances attending Alexander's death, necessarily caused him to be canonised as a saint. Centuries later, when Tartar oppression had faded into a dim tradition among the masses of the Russian people—when the empire was born anew under the gifted Peter the Great, that monarch erected a monastery to the memory of Alexander, and caused his relics to be removed, with much devotional ceremony, to St. Petersburg. His name was further honoured by being connected with a new order of knighthood, which comprehended some of the monarchs of Europe among its members.

Once again Russia, during the period of its darkness, was without a single star which might serve for guidance and for hope. We have no glimpses of the people; who, perhaps, despised and disregarded, may still have been, for the most part, exempt from those terrors and sufferings which fell upon them in the advent of the Tartar bondage. But the princes presented the same paltry spectacle as ever. Each neglectful of his own subjects, and perfectly oblivious of the

duties attaching to his station, was fighting or intriguing for the shadowy honour of the grand principedom. This internal confusion was increased by a division which arose among the Tartars. Nogay, a powerful chieftain, declared himself independent of the khan of Kaptschak, or, the Golden Horde; and setting up his sovereignty in the southern provinces, contended with his rival for the tribute, or rather taxes, of the Russians. Here was a great opportunity for the princes of the latter people; for, by united action, they might have aided one division of the Tartars to exterminate the other, and then have turned their arms unexpectedly against those who remained. Instead of this, the princes paid court to whichever obtained an ascendancy for the time, and thus incurred the anger of the other when his day of power came.

Constant dissensions so enfeebled the Russian princes, that at length most of them fell into obscurity, and the struggle for the grand principedom lay between two of them only—the princes Michael of Twer and Yury of Moscow; the latter city having been rebuilt, and erected into a separate appanage, since it had been destroyed by the Tartars. Yury, as the weakest, must probably have submitted, but that he had the address so to insinuate himself into the favour of the reigning khan, Usbek, as to gain the hand of the sister of the Tartar in marriage. This connection—a closer one than had hitherto existed between the Russians and their masters—encouraged Yury to make war upon Michael, who had assumed the title of grand prince. A battle followed, in which Yury was defeated, and his new-made wife, the Tartar princess, taken prisoner. The unfortunate lady soon after expired at Twer, under circumstances that led to the suspicion that her death was the result of violence. Yury accused Michael of having poisoned the princess, and Usbek-Khan summoned the victor to the Golden Horde, to answer to the crime laid to his charge.

It is generally assumed that the accusation was a calumny, or, at least, that if the Tartar princess did come unfairly by her death, yet that Michael was innocent of the crime. Distrustful of the intentions of the khan towards him, the prince sent one of his sons to the latter to assure him of his devotion, and to explain the malignant motives of the Prince of Twer. The khan was not to be appeased, and insisted on the



personal appearance of the grand prince to meet the charge. After some hesitation, Michael departed, conscious of his inability to resist the will of the oppressor of his country. With a presentiment of coming evil, he made his will before he started on his journey to the Horde, and carried with him rich presents, by which to modify the anger of his self-constituted judge. The implacable Yuri had been there before, and striven to prejudice the Tartar chieftains against his own countryman. A court was formed—the Tartar general who had been defeated by Michael was at its head, and Yuri was the accuser. Under such circumstances, the trial which followed was a judicial mockery; and a grand prince of Russia was sentenced to death by a foreign court! Such a proceeding was a startling one; and even Usbek-Khan hesitated before carrying it to extremities. Either to satisfy some scruples that might have arisen in his seared mind, or to make an idle parade of pretended justice, he ordered the case to be again tried before a new court. The same spirit pervaded both, and the same result followed. Michael was kept in chains for five-and-twenty days, during which his sons and friends were permitted to visit him; and he then suffered death at the hands of the headsman. This insulting exercise, or rather abuse, of Tartar authority occurred in the year 1320. A deeper humiliation could scarcely have been inflicted on either prince or people.

The implacable Yuri of Moscow succeeded to the throne of the grand prince; but he had only enjoyed his dignity a few years when he was assassinated by the eldest son of Michael, who, at the command of the khan, shared the fate of his father, and was put to death for the deed.

Michael's second son, Alexander, suc-

ceeded, in 1326, to the grand principedom. Scarcely a year had elapsed since his accession, when a report reached him that the Tartars living in Twer had formed a conspiracy to murder him. It is supposed that no such design was entertained by them; but that the calumnious report was spread by Ivan, the Prince of Moscow, who had succeeded to all his brother Yuri's implacable hatred to the family of the unfortunate Michael. But even on the assumption that the Tartars were guilty of the treacherous design attributed to them, justice and prudence both demanded a calm investigation into their conduct, that only those who were really involved in the guilty intention should suffer the punishment due to them. Instead of this, the grand prince acted like a despot and a madman, and caused every Tartar resident within his principality, who would not adopt Christianity, to be put to death. Such a wanton atrocity naturally aroused the anger of Usbek-Khan, whose power, fortunately for the subjects of the grand prince, was on the decline, or he would probably have executed an appalling vengeance. Still he drove Alexander from his throne; gave his dominions to his rival, Ivan of Moscow, whom he bound to pursue the outlawed prince wherever he went, and to deliver him a prisoner to the Tartars. He was eventually captured, together with his son; and both of them being sent to the Golden Horde, perished by the weapon of the headsman.

We now approach a period when Russia, still feeble and humbled, and threatened with another terrible Tartar visitation, was yet slowly and insensibly collecting its energies, prior to its resurrection to a national life more promising than any it had yet enjoyed.

## CHAPTER IX.

IVAN I.; HIS WEALTH AND CUNNING; SIMEON THE PROUD, AND IVAN II.; THE MOSCOW LINE OF SUCCESSION SUSPENDED; RESTORED IN THE PERSON OF DMITRY DONSKOI; HIS CONFLICTS WITH THE PRINCE OF TWER; DMITRY DEFEATS THE TARTARS AT THE GREAT BATTLE OF THE DON; THE TARTARS BURN MOSCOW AND RECOVER THEIR ASCENDANCY; DEATH OF DMITRY; HE IS SUCCEEDED BY VASSILY; INVASION OF RUSSIA BY TAMERLANE; VASSILY THE BLIND; HIS WILFULNESS, TROUBLES, AND DEATH.

THE grand principedom now fell to Ivan I., who obtained the surname of Kalita, or the Purse; partly, perhaps, on account of his

having a purse carried before him, to relieve the wants of the poor; but chiefly because of the immense wealth he eventually ac-



quired. He was a covetous, crafty, and unprincipled man, who still, however, had the wisdom to perceive that his interests were identical with those of his country; and that, in promoting the one, he was extending the other.

The wealth of Ivan enabled him to purchase entire domains and appanages, the protection of Usbek-Khan, and the preference of the primate of the Russian church, who, by removing his residence from Vladimir to Moscow, made the latter the capital of the empire. It is important to show how Ivan became possessed of so much wealth, as his mode of acquiring it reveals a trait in his character. He paid such assiduous and flattering attention to the khan, as to become appointed the representative in Russia of the Tartar chief, and collector of the taxes imposed by that foreign potentate. From the people he extorted, through the terror of the Tartar name, far more than he was authorised to do; and even subjected to the tax the inhabitants of parts of Russia who had not hitherto paid it at all. As it may well be supposed, the latter sums never reached the Tartar exchequer; and the careful Ivan went on increasing his wealth, and extending his dominions every year. Such was his extortion, that he sometimes exacted a double tribute, under the pretence that it was the command of the khan. He soon became far more powerful than his rival, the Prince of Twer; while the distance between him and the ordinary princes of Russia was constantly increasing. The Prince of Twer sometimes courted the Tartar power, and at others treated it with insulting neglect. Ivan hated the Tartars quite as much as his rival did; but he saw that it was only by the aid of the khan that he could ever hope to consolidate Russia under his own sway, and therefore he made frequent journeys to the Horde, and ever sought to propitiate the favour of the khan by flatteries and costly presents. The Tartar power was useful to Ivan, because he had cunning enough to direct it in such a way as promoted his interest; and he was too skilful an actor on the wide and varied theatre of actual life, to betray any emotion he deemed it prudent to conceal. It is not surprising that a man so subtle and unprincipled, should succeed in procuring the ruin of his rival, the Prince of Twer. He brought about a union of most of the Russian princes, who now acknowledged the au-

thority of a ruler whose wealth, dominions, and administrative abilities so far exceeded their own. Directing their power against the Prince of Twer, Ivan drove him as an outcast from Russia, and finally hunted him to death.

The crafty Ivan Kalita beheld with a profound satisfaction the almost daily increase of his power. In his hands the grand principedom was becoming what it had never been before in Russia, and its paramount authority was indisputable. Petty princes regarded him with a deep respect; the people looked upon him with awe; and his name was a terror in the ears of his enemies. He settled all disputes between the inferior princes; and, as he had the power to enforce his decisions, they were respected. Success attended his footsteps; the clergy favoured his designs; the boyards submitted placidly to his authority; and he might be said, in effect, to rule over the whole of Russia.

Despotism is preferable to anarchy; and under the tortuous rule of Ivan—who pursued even kinsmen who offended him with as much ferocity as he would have displayed towards external enemies—the country became tranquil, and, to some extent, prosperous. He held his iron sceptre with firmness, and awed down the host of petty tyrants who were ever ready to prey upon the people. Though with one hand he extorted heavy imposts, with the other he conferred protection on what he left. The depredations to which the country had been a prey were repressed; commerce rose from the dust; and markets and fairs appeared in many parts of the country; even in some where they had been hitherto unknown. At these fairs the produce of the East, of Greece, and of Italy, were bought or bartered for by the Russians, whose comforts were thus enhanced, while the revenues of the grand prince were promoted by the tax arising from these commercial gatherings. Kamenévitch, an old Russian chronicler, in describing the great mart of Mologa, on the Volga, where the commerce of Asia and Europe met in the seventy inns of its Slavonian suburbs, says, that at that place alone, 7,200 pounds' weight of silver were collected for the regal treasury. Ivan dimly perceived that the commercial prosperity of a people promoted the power of their sovereign, and he encouraged fairs and markets, on account of their golden results. As increasing wealth to some extent emancipated



him from the declining power of the khan, he laid heavy taxes—or what were then so regarded—upon all saleable articles.

The Russian chronicles relating to this period are extremely meagre. Notwithstanding the power acquired by Ivan, his reign was but a brief one, and he expired in or about 1341. He left two sons—Simeon (surnamed the Proud) and Ivan. These princes vowed, on the grave of their father, to agree to a peaceable division of his dominions; and, strange to say, they kept their oath. Simeon took the dignity of grand prince, and one-half the revenues; Ivan contented himself with the other half, and became Prince of Moscow. Simeon had to purchase his paramount title from the khan, who guaranteed him in the possession of it for an enormous pecuniary consideration. Simeon pursued the policy of his father; but his reign of thirteen years remains a blank on the scroll of history. This silence may at least be received as indirect evidence that no great war or calamity fell upon Russia while he bore the chief sway in it.

Simeon died childless in the year 1353, and Ivan purchased the grand principedom of the khan, and became paramount ruler, under the title of Ivan II. Neither his brother nor he possessed the subtle talents of their father; but the influence of the latter was felt long after he had been in his grave. His shadow yet rested upon the land, and tranquillity was preserved. Some of the minor princes attempted to promote their ambition at the sacrifice of their country's peace; but the paramount power was strong enough to punish their unprincipled presumption.

Ivan reigned during six eventless years; and then the design of his father, to preserve the sovereign authority in the line of the princes of Moscow, was for a time interrupted. Naurus-Khan, the Tartar chieftain, then gave the grand principedom to Prince Dmitry, of the Nevsky branch of the descendants of Ruric. So brief and feeble was his reign, that it had neither influence nor result. For a few years he sat in the regal seat rather than governed, and listlessly held a sceptre he could not wield. In 1362 he was put down by one khan just as he had been set up by another, and Dmitry Donskoi, the son of Ivan II., made grand prince in his stead.

The new sovereign was a man well adapted to the exalted but dangerous position he was

called to occupy. With an ambitious temper he united a calm and strong judgment. Convinced that the restoration of Russian independence depended upon the unity of the empire, and the rigid maintenance of the natural order of succession from father to son, he convened a meeting of the subsidiary princes, and obtained their consent to this important measure. Won for once to an act of reason and self-denial, they signed a treaty renouncing the disastrous mode of succession from brother to brother, and engaging themselves to recognise the authority of the grand prince, and that of his son and grandson after him. Vladimir the Brave, uncle to Dmitry Donskoi, and one of the most influential of Russian princes, first placed his name to the treaty, and his example was readily followed. This self-denial produced an abundant reward. By such attention to general, in preference to individual interests, a power was rising which was eventually to break the galling yoke of the Tartars, and to raise the seeming corpse of Russian independence to a second and a better life.

"Such," says a modern writer, "were the circumstances under which Dmitry ascended the throne. He clearly perceived the extraordinary progress towards a concentration of the resources of the empire that had been made in the two previous reigns, and his earliest care was to carry it still farther, by securing the right of succession in a direct line, so that the same course of policy might, with the more certainty, be transmitted without deviation. This wise measure was useful in every way. It had the effect of consolidating the common interests, which had hitherto been sacrificed to unseemly contentions; while it gave to the reigning prince a greater stake in tranquillity and conservation, since he felt that the labours of government were directed to the maintenance of the rights of his children, which, of course, were dearer to him than the rights of nephews, or brothers, or strangers. The heir, too, had the example of his father to emulate, and a similar motive actuated him on behalf of his successor. The establishment of the hereditary principle was also more acceptable to the nobles, who, dwelling about the court, were solicitous to cultivate the favour of the acknowledged heir, in order that the personal attachments which grew out of habitual intercourse, should descend to their children, who might thus, in turn, succeed



to the dignities enjoyed by their fathers. In fact, the old order of succession, from brother to brother, was hateful to the boyards of the grand principality, as the new prince was always attended by the boyards of his own appanage, for whom he was forced to provide by displacing all those whom he already found stationed at the capital."

Such was the liberal policy observed by Dmitry towards the boyards of the empire, that they became more attached to him than to their own immediate princes. In the last address he made to them, he observed, "Under my reign, you were not boyards, but really Russian princes." By raising the power of the boyards he depressed that of the princes, until both were verging into an order of nobility in which there were but small degrees of distinction. Dmitry saw that if unity was to exist, the grand prince must hold an unshared sceptre; that all appanaged princes must be actually subordinate to him as well as in theory; and that he must have no powerful and half-independent subject near the throne. Dmitry pursued his plans with a cautious wisdom; and so successful was he, that, in 1392, the boyards of Roris, the last Prince of Suzdal, surrendered him and his dominions to the grand prince.

It must not be supposed that Dmitry was enthroned on roses, and permitted to carry out his plans of family advancement and national regeneration without opposition. He had to contend with foes both at home and abroad. The Prince of Twer, the old rival of his family, could not quietly abandon the struggle for supremacy. Michael, or Mikhail, of Twer, assisted by his son-in-law the fierce Olguerd, Prince of Lithuania, rose in arms four times against him. During this suicidal conflict, Moscow itself was twice subjected to siege, and would have been taken but for the great strength of the stone walls which had been recently erected around it. For a time, victory seemed to favour the insurgent prince; but, at last, Olguerd died; and Dmitry, leading a confederation of his kinsmen against Michael, defeated him, and finally induced him to submit to a power he could no longer hope successfully to resist.

The most distinguishing event of Dmitry's reign was a war of a more dangerous and important kind. The decline of the Tartar power in Russia was still further accelerated by the breaking up of the Golden Horde

into rival factions. Several of the chiefs set themselves up as khans, and the vast forces of the Tartars were broken into detached bodies, following their own immediate chief, and as likely to make war on each other as to unite against a common foe. A dissatisfied prince who was disposed to seek the aid of the Tartars against his sovereign, knew not to which khan to apply. The Tartars were unable to conceal their constantly increasing weakness, and the princes were driven by necessity to seek assistance from Dmitry, when their possessions were invaded by bodies of vagrant Tartars, or other foes. The grand prince yielded aid, on condition of the return of implicit submission; and thus eventually all, or nearly all, the princes of the empire became his vassals.

Though the Tartars were broken up into several hordes, each distinguished by the name of the chief whose standard they followed, yet the paramount authority was claimed by Mamai, the khan of the Tartars of the Don, who exacted tribute from Dmitry. Mamai, with the quick perception of his race, saw that the Russians were making rapid strides towards independence. Aware that this would lead to the final expulsion or submission of the Tartars, he resolved to re-establish his despotic sway by the same ferocious means by which it was at first imposed. Dmitry had many spies at the Horde, who revealed to him the intentions of the khan, and he prepared for the coming struggle, by collecting around him the dependent princes and their armed followers. Mamai also appears to have had his informants, and each side became conscious of the designs of the other. The khan sought to gain time for the concentration of his strength by sending an embassy to the grand prince, with complaints about the insufficiency of the tribute money. Dmitry did not object to a delay, which he, also, could devote to increasing his strength, and drawing around him all those princes of Russia who could be convinced of their common danger. He therefore sent a counter-embassy to the khan, the members of which referred to a treaty, by which it was arranged that the tribute should be reduced. Mamai, baffled in diplomacy, resorted to intimidation, and commanded the grand prince to appear before him in person. Had the latter obeyed this despotic injunction, he would doubtless have fallen a victim to the fury of his oppressor, and have



been openly put to death, after a judicial mockery, on some concocted charge, or have been murdered secretly by the subtle arts of the poisoner. Dmitry had proceeded with prudence, and was in a condition to resort to the only alternative which a refusal to obey the command of the khan left open to him. The princes of Russia were at length resolved to make a great effort in vindication of the liberties of their country; the people were possessed of a painful remembrance of the atrocities of the Tartars, and inspired by a bitter hatred of them; and the clergy feared that if Tartar violence was again let loose upon the land, Christianity would be overthrown, for the sake of seizing the large possessions of the church. They consequently proclaimed the coming struggle to be a holy war—a war for the honour of God and the safety of man—a war alike for the church of Christ and the nationality of the empire—a war to preserve the altars of God from desecration, and the homes of the people from outrage and destruction. Such was the natural and becoming ardour of the priesthood for the war, that they declared the crown of martyrdom would be placed by angels on the head of every Russian who perished in the conflict, and that the gates of heaven would open of themselves to receive his soul.

Such was the spirit pervading both princes and people, that Dmitry was enabled to take the field with a power said to amount to 200,000 men; a force which, fighting on its own territory for its religion and nationality, ought to be invincible. Dmitry did not permit the Tartars to ravage the country between them and Moscow; but he led his troops at once to the river Don, to the point where, at no great distance, the Tartars were encamped on the opposite side. After addressing his soldiers, he gave them the choice of awaiting the assault of the enemy, or of crossing the river and themselves commencing the attack. Animated by patriotic ardour, they unanimously decided for the latter; and seemed to long impatiently for the hour which should decide the fate of their country. Having transported his battalions across the river, the grand prince set the vessels adrift, so as to cut off all hopes of retreat, and excite that ferocity of valour which is the result of desperation. The measure appears to have been a necessary one: not only were the Russians opposed to a race whom they had

been accustomed to regard as conquerors and masters, but the Tartars far exceeded them in numbers. The old chroniclers assert that the Tartars were thrice the number of the Russians; but this statement bears an air of incredibility, and is, we suspect, merely a flourish of pardonable triumph. The Russians, who had generations of oppression to avenge, commenced the assault with ungovernable fury. Such was their impetuosity, that numbers even of their own troops were thrown down and trampled to death in the mighty shock. The astonished Tartars reeled for a moment, and then dashing onward, met the assault with equal fury. Terrible was the slaughter on each side; but the superior numbers of the Tartars enabling them to fill up every gap that was made in their ranks, and continually to pour down fresh supplies of men upon the field, seemed to promise them the victory. Apparently overwhelmed, the Russians seemed to waver, and would probably have fled, but that the river was at their backs, their ships were gone, and flight was impossible. Nothing remained for them but to conquer or to perish nobly after having avenged their fall by the slaughter of many of their foes. Wrought to an excitement scarcely short of madness, it is related that they fought rather with the ferocity and strength attributed to demons than as if animated with the common passions of men. The slaughter of the Tartars was enormous; but their great numbers and stolid bravery might yet have won them the victory, but for one of those incidents which, occurring in the moment of exhaustion, so often decide the result of battles. Dmitry, with the wisdom of an able soldier, had kept back a considerable detachment from his army, to be called into action only if their presence was urgently required. At a critical time this reserve fell unexpectedly upon the rear of the Tartars, whom their attack threw into confusion and dismay. The apprehensions of the Tartars magnified the number of these fresh foes, and they fell into that disorder which precedes panic. The Russians perceived their advantage, and renewed the assault with a fury at once led by hope and pricked forward by despair. Mamai and the Tartars fled headlong from the well-contested and bloody field, and the Russians had obtained a great victory over their oppressors. Terrible was the loss of life at which it was achieved; but no price could be too great for the



glorious result that had been obtained. The spell of Tartar invincibility had been broken, and the infant liberty of Russia baptized in blood; while the same red stream had wiped away the shame of generations of national slavery. Eight days were passed in bestowing the rites of sepulture upon the Russian dead; but the bodies of the Tartars were regarded with such aversion, that they were left unburied, to become the prey of birds and beasts. Those heaps of Tartar bones, which long whitened the banks of the river, were an eloquent though silent warning against aggression, and an insolent scorn of the claims of the helpless. It was in honour of this victory, that the grand prince, Dmitry, received from his applauding people the surname of Donskoi, by which he stands distinguished in the records of his country.

Great was the joy of the Russians, but their national independence was not established. The work was begun, and well begun, but it remained to be completed; and calamitous reverses were yet to be experienced. Russia, exhausted by the great effort it had made, was unable to follow up the blow; and the defeated Tartars had time to recover themselves. Bent on vengeance, they cautiously prepared for a renewal of the struggle, but they did not dare again to provoke hostilities until the hordes of the Don and the Volga had effected a union. The battle of the Don was fought in 1380, and it took the Tartars two years to recover from the effects of it. But in 1382 they swept with a mighty power over the frontier provinces, and, ravaging the country as they went, penetrated to the strong walls of Moscow. The fortifications of the city had lately been strengthened; the ramparts were powerful; and the ponderous gates were of iron. Dmitry looked upon them with pride and hopefulness, and anticipated another victory over his despotic and barbarous foes. Such was his confidence, that he left the charge of the city to one of his generals, while he went further into the interior to recruit his army. The act was an unfortunate one; for the people had more confidence in their sovereign than in themselves. Yet all might have been well but for the meanness and cowardice of the priesthood. Had they placed a vital trust in the Deity whose providence they preached, they would have cheered the fainting hearts of the timid, have roused the fearful from their apathy, and have

strengthened the feeble to the heroism of endurance. The calm and inspiring bearing of a brave priest might, at such a time, do more than the brawny arm of the soldier. Heroes impart their spirit to all around them; and, in like manner, the craven temper of the coward corrupts and depresses even the brave. The metropolitan and priests of Moscow, accompanied by a number of base and wealthy citizens, taking advantage of the absence of Dmitry, abandoned the city on the approach of the Tartar host. The act was contagious; those who should have remained in the city to the last, offering the consolations of religion to the dying, and the incitements of patriotism to those who yet lived to wreak the fury of an injured people on the foe, had slunk silently away, preferring to secure the safety of their worthless lives to the discharge of their duties on earth, and the attainment of that bliss which awaits the just in heaven!

The priesthood fled, and a sense of terror sunk deep into the hearts of the people. The garrison made a feeble show of resistance upon the walls; and the Tartars, beholding the strength of the defences, treacherously held out promises of pardon to the inhabitants if they would submit without further hostilities. Experience must have taught the Russians that their foes were as false as they were cruel; that their words were as unstable as water, and as deceitful as the sultry air oppressed by the coming storm. Many a terrible tradition must have told as to what had been the fate of those who had trusted to Tartar mercy! They must have known that it was better to die with weapons in their hands, dripping with the blood of an implacable and unprincipled foe, than have trusted to a horde of robbers who never forgave, and who actually experienced a satanic delight in slaughter. But fear dulls the senses and blinds the perception. The people of Moscow trusted to the promises of their foes, and threw open their gates to them. The result might have been anticipated. The Tartars rushed in, massacred every person they met in the streets, and then set the city on fire. Having accomplished the revenge they meditated for their defeat on the banks of the Don, the barbarians returned to their haunts, flattering themselves that they had effectually trodden down the rising spirit of independence and recovered their tottering power over the Russians. For a time they had so; but no mortal means could stay the



decline that was consuming their power, and the time of their own doom was approaching. "All they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword," is a divine truth, even more applicable to nations than to individuals. Injustice and violence provoke the spirit of retaliation; and, if not in one age, yet in another, the day of vengeance will inevitably come.

When Dmitry returned to his smitten capital, nothing was left him but to purchase safety by an ignoble submission to the foe over whom he had so recently triumphed as a victor. His great heart must have swelled with intense and suffocating emotion when he had to propitiate the forbearance of the khan, and once again perform the bitter humiliation of begging his dignity at the hands of the Tartar potentate. The empire that had been within his grasp was shattered into fragments; the glorious dream of national independence had melted like the early frosts of autumn before a yet powerful sun; the hopes of a life—a life of wisdom, toil, and heroism—were gone like the memory of a chaotic and uneasy dream, which has left behind it only a sense of gloom and impending evil.

Russian independence, though checked, was not destroyed; the wounds on its infant liberty began to heal even with the restoration of Moscow. Princes, boyards, and people were alike roused to the necessity of unity, and all hoped for the time which, though deferred, they yet expected. The grand principedom was still acknowledged, and the consolidation of the empire remained unbroken. The recent outrage of the Tartars had excited still more bitterly against them the hatred of those whom they oppressed. During his reign of seven-and-twenty years, Dmitry was unable again to make head against the Tartar power; yet he silently pursued his plans of raising the power of the grand principedom, and of consolidating the empire. He died in 1389, leaving a solemn injunction to his son to persevere in his policy, and to direct all his efforts to the eventual expulsion of the Tartars from Russia. Dmitry was a wise prince; and, but for the sad mistake of once depending upon others where he should have relied only upon himself, would have been regarded as a great one. The recreant priests who fled from Moscow trampled the glory of their sovereign beneath their feet; and his fame was sullied by the flames which enveloped the city.

Yet is the name of Dmitry Donskoi honoured in the scroll of history; as, indeed, it truly deserves to be. The successful are the most applauded by posterity; but those who aim highly, and labour worthily, even in failure scarcely deserve less.

Vassily, the son of Dmitry, succeeded to the throne of the grand principedom without opposition. Of a haughty character and unbending turn of mind, Vassily was fitted to wield a sceptre in barbarous times. Stern, even to ferocity, to his princes and people, he was patient and pliant to his Asiatic and European neighbours. He was resolved not to waste his strength in contentions with them, but to reserve it in case of another collision with the Tartars. Though of a remarkably aristocratic and imperious nature, he felt it necessary to humble his pride so far as to proceed to the Golden Horde, and purchase of the Tartar khan the right to his dignity. At the same time he acquired permission to assume the sovereignty over seven appanages, which he had wrung from as many of his kinsmen, whom he reduced to the necessity of mingling in the ranks of his courtiers, or of dying in exile. The Lithuanians, who had for some time harassed his western frontier, he opposed rather by policy than by force of arms; and he contrived to obtain from their prince, who was his father-in-law, a forbearance it would have been inconvenient to extort.

A few years were passed in comparative tranquillity, when Russia was threatened by two fierce and powerful foes in opposite directions. These were Vitovt, the prince of the Lithuanians, in the west, and the barbarous conqueror Tamerlane, and his hordes of Tartars, in the east. Timour, or Tamerlane, was one of those romantic barbarians who, though of humble birth, yet cherished the ambitious and brutal dream of universal conquest. Though reported to have been merely an Asiatic shepherd, yet he came of a tribe regarded as noble. Born in unsettled and revolutionary times, bred to the use of arms from his infancy, at the age of five-and-twenty he stood forth as the most distinguished man of his country. Reverses, however, came upon him: he experienced vicissitude of a romantic kind; and, for some time, led the life of a vagrant and an outlaw. Again did he become the favourite of fortune. At the age of thirty-four, he was invested with that imperial command supposed to reside only in the



descendants of Ghengis Khan. Zagatai, the kingdom of the usurper, was a fertile territory, five hundred miles in length and in breadth; but this was so far from satisfying his ambition, that it was but one of seven-and-twenty crowns which he seized and wore before his death. After the conquest of Persia, Tamerlane resolved to reduce to submission those of the Tartars who had proclaimed their independence of the parent authority. In the execution of this project, he marched, in 1398, at the head of 400,000 soldiers, upon the Golden Horde, or that branch of the Tartars who had so long settled on the banks of the Volga. He fell upon the combined Tartars there, and inflicted upon them a severe chastisement. To use the language of his own chronicler, he gave them to the wind of desolation. Some of the Tartars who fled, lured the victor on in the direction of Moscow. His course was marked by ruin almost to the walls of the city, which, at the same time, was threatened in another direction by Vitovt, and an enormous army of Lithuanians. The Russians were in despair; the capital of their empire was threatened with destruction from opposite quarters, and stood between two fires; while the people themselves, enervated by bondage and frequent defeat, placed all their trust in an image of the Virgin, to which miraculous powers were attributed. The desponding Vassily beheld approaching destruction on every hand; and it seemed as if the extinction of the empire was at hand. Under these circumstances, their impending doom was averted by an unforeseen event, of a kind which gave an apparently rational colour to the statements of the Russians—that it was the result of the merciful interference of the Virgin in their favour. Tamerlane, recalled by his ambition to the south, suddenly retraced his steps; while Vitovt and his Lithuanians pushed forward towards the Golden Horde. The invading armies met, and fell upon each other. Russia was thus relieved from the presence of two terrible foes, neither of whom she had the power or spirit to encounter. When Tamerlane had subdued the Lithuanians, he turned towards the vast peninsula of India, where a period of conquest and plunder was followed by his assumption of the title of emperor.

Happily, Tamerlane was too much occupied elsewhere to permit him to return; and, in this invasion, the Russians suffered

far less than the Tartars of the Golden Horde. Their wealth had been pillaged, their forces scattered, and their military reputation humbled. Notwithstanding the tenacity with which they clung to the despotic power they had acquired by the sword, it was evident that this blow must rapidly accelerate their decline. The ascendancy of the princes of the Moscow line continued to increase; but yet Vassily was not able to set the Tartars at defiance. Some years afterwards, he made an experiment in that direction; but it only led to his own humiliation. Without consulting the khan, he caused himself to be crowned at Moscow, with all the splendour of imperial dignity. Not only was the act a breach of treaty, but it was regarded by the Tartars as an insult to their supremacy. The anger of the khan was aroused; and his power, broken as it had been, was yet such that the Russians feared to brave it. Vassily acknowledged that he had committed an error, and sued to the khan for pardon. The Tartars had no desire to appeal to arms, and the Russian prince was permitted to retain his dignity as grand prince, on condition that he again tendered fealty to the khan as his superior lord.

Vassily died in 1425, after a reign of six-and-thirty years, which he had devoted chiefly to the promotion of the interests of the grand principedom. Though destitute of the great talents of his father, he had carried out his principles with much perseverance. At the close of life, he compelled the Russian princes and boyards to acknowledge his infant son as the indisputable heir to the throne. He also exacted from them a vow that they would have no communication whatever with the Tartars or Lithuanians, but preserve against them a spirit of implacable resentment. With the temper of a despot, he banished all those who refused to comply with these demands. It was during the reign of Vassily that money was first coined in Russia. Prior to this time, mention had been made of grivnas; but the term did not refer to a coin, but to a certain weight of silver. Foreign commerce was carried on either by barter, or by gold and silver weighed in exchange for the corresponding articles. Pieces of marten skins, or other scraps of fur, were the current money in petty transactions. At length, a Tartar coin came into circulation at Moscow and at Twer. Polish and German coins also found their way into use among



the Russian people; and, in 1420, a mint was established at Novgorod.

Vassily Vassilievitch, the infant son of the late sovereign, succeeded to the throne; but not without difficulty. Yury, Prince of Galitsch, relying upon his own power, endeavoured to restore the old and disastrous order of succession from brother to brother. Claiming the throne, he appealed to his followers for support. The time for a successful opposition of this kind had passed, and the principle of succession from father to son had taken a firm root in the nation. The clergy took the alarm; and the primate, who had proclaimed the young sovereign, summoned the princes to support his authority, and pronounced an excommunication against the rebellious Yury. It is probable that the feeble thunder of the church might have been disregarded, but that it happened to be followed by a pestilence, which alarmed the malcontents, and checked their hostile preparations. The effect, however, was but transitory; and when the contagious sickness passed away, Yury returned to his demand. An appeal to the Golden Horde was considered requisite, and both the infant prince and his turbulent uncle proceeded with their dependents to the banks of the Volga, and laid their claims before the khan. So strong was the assemblage of boyards on the side of the legitimate sovereign, and so powerful were their arguments, or bribes, that the khan rejected the pretensions of Yury, and confirmed the succession of the infant Vassily. The Tartar chief even went so far as to release the latter from the payment of tribute to the Horde, and to decree that Yury should hold the bridle of his nephew's horse, on the entrance of the latter into his capital.

The decisions of the Tartar khans were no longer regarded as inevitable, and exempt from all appeal. Yury put on a semblance of submission; but he resolved speedily to seize by force what he had been unable to obtain by his representations. Collecting his forces, he appeared suddenly before Moscow, took the city by surprise, and compelled it to surrender. This done, he banished Vassily, and seized the throne which was the cause of his conspiracy. But a public opinion had now grown up in Moscow; and the moral influence of public opinion is more powerful than the sword. It soon neutralised the triumph of the usurper; and that, too, without shedding one drop of blood. Every one declared for

the rights of the deposed prince; the authority of Yury was disavowed by the nobles, priests, and people; and the whole population of the capital, in solemn procession, followed their legitimate sovereign into banishment. An appalling silence reigned in the streets of Moscow, which seemed as if it had been smitten and depopulated by the plague. Yury found himself deserted; and even his own son had left him. This painful isolation struck terror to his heart, and he felt how dependent a prince was upon the submission of his people. Of what value was a sceptre that could be held only in a desert, or a throne that stood amidst a silent wilderness of dwellings? Yury was vanquished by this passive opposition; and in a few days he descended from his solitary throne, and restored it to the legitimate heir.

The devotion of the boyards and citizens of Moscow was not personal to the infant grand prince; it was merely an attachment to the principle of legitimacy. Vassily was imprudent, perverse, and obstinate. Unable to direct his own steps with wisdom, he yet impatiently rejected the advice of those who had proved their attachment to his interests, and their ability to proffer valuable counsels. A calamity of after-life procured for him the melancholy title of Vassily the Blind, which was applied to him in a double sense. Then sightless in body and dark in mind, this wilful prince was indebted to the compassion of his people for that support which he could not have obtained from their respect. His caprice led him into such errors as excited alike the suspicion both of Russians and Tartars. He is described as seeming to vacillate from choice, or in obedience to some infatuation that was always leading him into crooked paths of policy, and perplexing and perverting his views. Once the Tartars hurled him from the throne; but they permitted him to resume his regal dignity. Another time the son of Yury, encouraged by the discontent which prevailed, unfurled the banner of insurrection. Vassily was a second time deposed; and his brutal cousin put out the eyes of the unfortunate prince. Hence his surname—the Blind. The barbarity of the deed produced a reaction of popular feeling in favour of the down-trodden monarch. Some emotion of pity was mingled with an almost idolatrous respect for the principle of hereditary succession. Tradition had much to say of do-



mestic conflicts waged by rival claimants of the grand principedom; of Russian blood, shed in torrents by Russian hands, to settle questions in which the people had no interest, and no part. Thus the principle of succession from father to son had become dear to the people; for they regarded it as a source of peace. True, by this means the crown might descend upon the head of a perverse prince like Vassily; or, indeed, upon one hopelessly devoid of intellect: yet it was not the blindly obstinate man, or the drivelling idiot, the people revered, but the *principles* of order, peace, and justice. It mattered little by what machinery they were obtained, so that the nation really enjoyed them. Idiotic prince, if it must be so; yet even that painful alternative, rather than servile war.

Thus the usurpation of the son of Yury was as hateful to the people as that of his father. Even in Russia, rude as its society yet was, the time had passed when any powerful chieftain could seize with impunity

that which he desired to possess. Neither nobles nor people would tolerate the would-be sovereign. All fell from his side, and declared for their blind monarch. Trembling for his unworthy life, the usurper fled to Novgorod, where he was poisoned by his own attendants; a fate which, sombre as it was, he well deserved. The city that had sheltered him was compelled to pay a heavy fine for having done so. No other incident of importance diversified the long reign of Vassily the Blind, who went unregretted to his grave in the year 1462. But the principle of hereditary succession was now established; and his son, Ivan III., ascended without opposition a throne the power of which he was to consolidate, and the dignity of which he was to exalt in the eyes of Europe. One hundred and thirty years had elapsed since Ivan Kalita commenced his reign; and the people, during that period, had come to regard the right of the princes of the Moscow line to the sovereignty of Russia as something unimpeachable, if not divine.

## CHAPTER X.

IVAN III., KNOWN AS THE GREAT; HIS CRAFTY POLICY; HE TAKES THE TARTAR CITY OF KASAN; SUBDUES NOVGOROD, AND ANNEXES IT TO HIS DOMINIONS; TARTAR INVASION AND COWARDICE OF THE GRAND PRINCE; BREAKING UP OF THE GOLDEN HORDE AND ANNIHILATION OF THE TARTAR POWER; IVAN SUBDUES VIATKA AND PSKOF, AND THE INDEPENDENT PRINCES OF RUSSIA; CAUSES THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER; WRESTS A LARGE TERRITORY FROM THE LITHUANIANS; ASSUMES THE TITLE OF CZAR; HIS POLICY TO THE COURTS OF EUROPE; DISCONTENT OF THE BOYARDS; IVAN CAUSES HIS GRANDSON DMITRI TO BE CROWNED AS HIS SUCCESSOR, BUT AFTERWARDS EXCLUDES HIM; JEWISH HERESY IN THE RUSSIAN CHURCH; IVAN'S REFORMS AND DESPOTISM; HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.

THE time we are now approaching has been justly termed the period of despotism. As the principle of strengthening the power of the grand prince met with fewer obstacles, it went beyond the point at which it should have been restrained, and eventually produced a government in which unmitigated despotism was supported by frightful cruelty.

Ivan III., known as Ivan the Great (a surname he can scarcely be said to have deserved), ascended the throne of Moscow at the early age of twenty-two. At this time of life, the fresh mind of youth is seldom contaminated by the sinister principles of statecraft; but the new grand prince was one of those passionless natures who may

be said never to have been influenced by the feelings of youth. Before the bounding elasticities of boyhood had ceased in other men, he was an adept in casuistry, and gifted with the power of mental concealment. A worshipper of the autocratic principle, the labours of his long reign of forty-three years were devoted to the establishment of Russian independence and of an unmitigated despotism; and the principles established by Ivan still cast their heavy shadows over the broad territories of the Russian empire. He was prepared to sacrifice everything to his interests; and no lofty emotions appear to have ever animated his bosom. So intensely selfish was he,



that the contemplation of much of his conduct excites emotions of disgust. Profoundly crafty, he obtained all his objects in some indirect and frequently ignoble manner. His perseverance bordered upon greatness; but his prudence degenerated into abject cowardice. Such was the caution with which he proceeded, that the early acts of his reign are described as more resembling the subterfuges of a coward than the crafty artifices of a despot.

He was placed in trying circumstances, which required all the exercise of his subtle talents; of which, as yet, he knew not the extent. Enemies abroad were to be met, while independence at home was to be created. On one hand were the Tartars, and on the other the Lithuanians; while within the Russian frontiers were the independent states of Novgorod, Viatka, and Pskof, besides other unsettled appanages, the princes of which did not yet recognise his authority. Truly there was work enough both for diplomacy and the sword; but the subtle and sometimes seemingly perplexed Ivan was equal to the position it was his lot to fill. Those evils he had most resolved to check, he pretended at first to entirely acquiesce in. His cold smile fell oftenest upon the man he meant at some future time to crush. Thus he betrayed his enemies into carelessness, and patiently awaited for a favourable hour in which he could exterminate them. He first practised upon the khan by withholding the customary tribute, but without any appearance of hostility or opposition. He merely evaded the payment, while he acknowledged the right of the khan, who was induced to believe that the grand prince was still his vassal. Such was the seeming humility of Ivan, that he even induced the khan to withdraw the Tartar residents and their retainers, together with the Tartar merchants, from Moscow. A little bribery contributed to this result; and the haughty strangers, who insulted even the precincts of the palace with the insolent bearing of masters, were, in effect, banished from the city. Such was the seeming humility of this designing man, that his wife, a high-spirited lady, had much difficulty in persuading him to abandon the humiliating and even disgusting ceremonies with which Russian princes had been compelled to receive the Tartar envoys. Hitherto they had advanced to meet the barbarian ambassadors—spread a carpet of fur beneath the feet of his horse—gone upon

their knees while the khan's letter was read to them—presented to the envoy a cup of koumiss, and licked from the mane of the horse any drops of the beverage that might have fallen upon it!

Kasan, the first and most important of Tartar cities, was a standing insult and a perpetual source of irritation to the Russians. Its inhabitants, rather thieves than citizens, subsisted chiefly by predatory excursions. So general and indiscriminate were their licentious proceedings, that even neighbouring hordes of Tartars were not unwilling to witness their humiliation. Here, then, was an opportunity which invited even the cautious Ivan to action. Collecting all his available forces, he marched, about the year 1468, against Kasan, with the intention of driving out those restless men who had brought the habits of robbers within the walls of a city. At the time Ivan conducted this movement, the armies of the Golden Horde were advancing into Russia, doubtless with the hope of restoring that power which the khan must have seen was crumbling into nothingness. Ivan's army was not only numerous, but it consisted of the flower of the Russian population. So imposing was its appearance, that the army of the khan retired at its approach. Thus Ivan had all the honour of having won a victory without the hazard of striking a single blow; a kind of triumph quite in harmony with his timid and fox-like nature.

Instead of being encouraged to decisive action by this fortuitous success, Ivan deferred his attempt on Kasan until the following year. Even then he held back his impatient soldiery, and acted in a strangely hesitating and equivocal way. Resolved not to return without plunder, the Russians attacked the city, even against the orders of Ivan to the contrary. Electing a leader of their own, they fell upon Kasan, and utterly defeated its defenders. The spiritless grand prince, perceiving that the enemy was no longer capable of resistance, poured his enormous forces upon the fallen city, and once again obtained the semblance of a victory. Yet even in this proceeding, where the Russian force was so overwhelming that danger was almost an impossibility, Ivan kept far from the scene of action, and issued his orders from Moscow.

The attention of the grand prince was now called to the three independent states of Novgorod, Viatka, and Pskof. Novgorod, as the most wealthy and powerful,



openly exhibited its distrust of his intentions. Its citizens solicited the assistance of the inhabitants of Pskof, and expressed their intention to march at once against the grand prince, as a measure of anticipation. They had detected his cowardice, and believed they could inspire him with a sense of terror. Still, to protect themselves against his power, they submitted to Casimir, Prince of Lithuania, and became his subjects. The politic Ivan sought by every means to win over Pskof to his interests, that he might deal with Novgorod alone. So artfully did he proceed, that he succeeded in this design, and even contrived to neutralise all the opposition he had reason to fear. When fully prepared, he demanded that the citizens of Novgorod should acknowledge his authority. As he anticipated, the reply was conveyed in the language of scorn and defiance. He had obtained the pretext he desired, and his next messengers to Novgorod were three powerful armies, who entered the territories of the state in different directions. Such was their overwhelming superiority to the forces of Novgorod, that resistance was hopeless. The more so, as the troops of Ivan possessed firearms and cannon—a recent acquisition, the use of which he had learned from Aristotle of Bologna, an Italian, whom he had taken into his service as an architect, mint-master, and founder. After a brief and gallant struggle, the opposition of the Novgorodians was trampled into the dust. Swarms of peasantry, following in the rear of the army of the grand prince, succeeded the soldiers in the work of plunder and license. Ivan had really encouraged these outrages; but with an affectation of compassion, he pretended to repress them. He said he grieved for the people, and wished to protect them from unnecessary violence; but, in secret, he gloated over the severity of the wound he had caused to be inflicted. Weakened as Novgorod was, the victor did not at once attach it to his dominions. That would have involved its partition among those princes by whose aid he had subdued it. He had made promises to that effect; but without the least intention of fulfilling them. He therefore affected a generous and magnanimous tone, and merely exacted a rich ransom and an act of submission from the conquered city. Enfeebled as it had been, he knew that it must fall into his hands whenever, at some future time, he extended them to receive it. Still he seized upon

some of its tributaries, under the transparent pretext of relieving an exhausted state from some of the toilsome duties of government. By this means he transferred much of the commerce of Novgorod to his own city of Moscow.

Availing himself of that feeling of discontent and jealousy ever felt, to some extent, by the poor towards the rich, Ivan succeeded in sowing dissension between the nobles and the people of Novgorod. That done, he induced the latter to appeal to him for justice—an application which he at once answered by proceeding to their city with great magnificence. The people were dazzled by the almost oriental splendour of his numerous retinue, and captivated by the generous interest he appeared to take in their affairs. The nobles and wealthy citizens of Novgorod whom they accused, he loaded with chains, and sent as prisoners to Moscow. Thus the crafty despot got rid of those who alone could efficiently oppose his selfish designs upon the city. The blind animosity of the people induced them to overlook, that, in this proceeding of the grand prince, one of those laws which had for centuries been the basis of their liberty, was violated. The ancient law of the state was, “that none of its citizens should ever be tried or punished out of the limits of its own territory.” Yet Ivan, in trampling down this safeguard of the freedom of the citizens of Novgorod, acted with such profound duplicity, that he even won the popular favour by his violation of the charter of their independence.

Gradually the inhabitants of Novgorod referred all their disputes to the decision of the grand prince. Profiting by this disposition, he at length summoned offenders to appear before him at Moscow. The Novgorodians hesitated; submission seemed a surrender of their national independence; and yet they were won to submission by the artful representations of Ivan. His penetrating gaze was always bent deep into the future. For seven years did this persevering despot labour to lure them from those distinctive habits, and that original character, which separated them from the rest of the empire.

At length he deemed events ripe for the disclosure of the design he had so long veiled. An envoy from Novgorod, in an interview with the grand prince, either inadvertently or in consequence of having been bribed to do so, addressed him by the title of liege lord, instead of by that of



master, which had hitherto been the custom. Ivan grasped eagerly at the mistake, or treachery, and at once claimed all the privileges of an absolute master. He demanded that the republican city should take an oath to him as a legislator and its judge; that it should receive his boyards with full authority to exercise their almost irresponsible control; that it should yield to them the revered palace of Yaroslaf, esteemed as the sacred temple of Novgorodian liberty, and where, for more than five centuries, their public assemblies had been held; and, finally, that each citizen should abdicate his share of the sovereignty for the sake of the general good.

The people of Novgorod were filled with astonishment and rage; for hitherto they appear not to have entertained any suspicion that the extinction of their independence was aimed at. The great bell of the city summoned the people to the market-place. Thither they rushed in furious crowds; and, having seized on their imprudent envoy, they placed him on his trial for treason against the state; and on his being condemned, tore him limb from limb on the spot. Some of the nobles, whom they also suspected of being accessory to the surrender of their freedom, they murdered in the streets, and they then again solicited the aid of the Prince of Lithuania, and acknowledged him as their sovereign. The crafty Ivan was quite prepared for this storm of passionate excitement; but when the intelligence reached his ears, he pretended to be overcome with surprise at what he called the treachery and ingratitude of the people. This man, who was impenetrable to any other feeling than that of the most concentrated selfishness, affected much emotion, and groaned repeatedly. It was not they, he declared, but he who had been deceived. With well-assumed vehemence, he broke out into lamentations, which blinded even those who knew his habitual hypocrisy. He accused the people of Novgorod of having spread a snare for him. It was they, he said, who sought him for their sovereign; and when, yielding to their wishes, he had assumed that title, they disavowed him—they had the impudence to give him the lie formally in the face of all Russia—they had dared to shed the blood of their compatriots who remained faithful, and to betray heaven and the holy land of the Russians, by calling within its limits a foreign religion and domination.

These crafty lamentations were addressed by Ivan to his priests, nobles, and people, and to all his subordinate princes, whom he sought to unite in a crusade against Novgorod. Many entered warmly into the scheme, which was supported strongly by the clergy. The republic of Pskof and the principality of Twer alone stood aloof; but the crafty tyrant withdrew their military power, under the form of a contingent, and left them helpless. The citizens of Novgorod were alarmed at the cloud which hung over them, and endeavoured to obtain conditions. These were refused by Ivan, who demanded a surrender of everything. "I will reign at Novgorod," he exclaimed, "as I do at Moscow!" At the same time, as if to temper his despotic bearing, he promised to respect the liberties of the citizens; though he carefully took away every means of defending them.

The Novgorodians were in despair. Several times they armed themselves, and appeared resolved to risk a conflict which the overwhelming number of their foes rendered hopeless. Then, terrified by the desperate nature of their affairs, they sunk into a hopeless despondency. For a month the armies of Ivan remained stationary, but yet, as it were, with swords uplifted, as if in the act to strike. He cared nothing for military glory, but merely wanted the accomplishment of his purpose. To him the mode was nothing; his mind regarded only the end. He sought to domineer by terror rather than by arms, and shrunk even from encountering that loss which might attend upon victory. He was patient; and he had collected so powerful a military force only that he might avoid war. His calculations were correctly made; Novgorod, weakened, oppressed, and distracted, at length submitted without a blow. The liberty of Novgorod, held in his murderous embrace, suffered the agonies of protracted suffocation, and at length died in despair. On the 15th of January, 1478, the national assemblies ceased, and the people took the oath of servitude. Three days later the boyards, and the most influential of the inhabitants, passively entered into the service of the grand prince, who showed his now unimpeachable power by confiscating the vast revenues of the clergy, and bestowing them upon the boyards and their followers, by whose assistance he had smitten the prostrate and abject city. Nor did he go without his own share of the spoil; for, in such



a distribution, he was not the man to forget himself. He desired to bleed Novgorod of its treasure, until the once prosperous city should be so exhausted as never to be able again to make head against his power. With this view, quickened by the inordinate selfishness which possessed him like an evil spirit, he seized upon everything valuable to which he could establish the faintest shadow of a claim. An estimate may be formed of the rapacity of this regal vulture, from the fact, that he is said to have conveyed to Moscow 300 cart-loads of gold, silver, and precious stones, besides an enormous quantity of furs, cloths, and other valuable merchandise!

Ivan had not long enjoyed his insidious triumph before he himself was assailed by terrors similar to those which he had so remorselessly inflicted. News reached him that the Tartars of the Golden Horde were preparing for another invasion of Russia, with the hope of recovering their expiring power over it. Russia, concentrated and prepared with a powerful army, was undaunted; and Ivan had no cause for fear. Two hundred thousand soldiers awaited his command, and felt themselves fully equal to encounter the weakened Tartars. His troops panted for distinction, and longed to avenge themselves on their ancient oppressors; while the princes of the empire were warmly devoted to his cause. Even civilians and women spoke with an anger, mingled with contempt, of the barbarous foe. A prince of a martial and enthusiastic nature might have enlisted in his cause every able man among his subjects, and by one merciless and well-directed blow, have extinguished the Tartar army in a sea of blood. Yet, under these circumstances, there was but one man in Russia who trembled at the danger, and that man was the sovereign. When his vast power, full of spirit and confident of victory, marched forward to meet the enemy, this miserable recreant deemed himself conquered. Overcome by his shadowy terrors, he sent his princess to find an asylum in a remote district of the north; and then, deserting the army, shut himself up within the walls of Moscow. He even recalled his son to the capital; but the prince, humiliated at beholding the abject fears of his father, properly refused to leave his post with the army. Even the people became indignant; and, amidst portentous murmurs, demanded, "Why he had overburdened them with taxes, without

paying the khan his tribute? And why, when he had brought the enemy into the heart of the country, did he refuse to fight them?"

The grand prince knew not how to answer these reproaches, which he could not altogether avoid hearing. The murmurs of an indignant people added to his terrors, even in his remote and well-guarded chambers. Casting vainly about for excuses, he convoked a meeting of the bishops and boyards, for the purpose, he said, of asking their advice. Their counsel was conclusive: even the successors of those timid and selfish priests who had betrayed Moscow to destruction in the time of the brave Dmitry Donskoi, were decided now. "Does it," said they, "become mortals to dread death? It is in vain to fly from fear. March boldly against the enemy; such is our advice!"

The reluctant autocrat was compelled by a sense of shame to rejoin his army; but his unconcealed fears diminished the ardour of his troops. He remained behind the river Luga, and secretly opened a disgraceful communication with the Tartars, in which he treated for pardon. The baseness of fear could not be carried further: the soldiery and the people of Moscow, on hearing of his conduct, grew turbulent. The primate of Moscow, animated by despair, sought his presence, and endeavoured to rouse him to a sense of manliness. "Moved by our tears," said the head of the church, "you set out once more to combat the enemy of the Christians; and now you implore peace from that infidel who scorns your prayer! Ah, prince, to what counsels have you lent your ear! Is it not to throw away your shield, and shamefully take to flight? From what a height of grandeur are you not descending! Would you give up Russia to the sword, and the churches to plunder? And whither would you fly? Can you soar like the eagle? Will you fix your nest amidst the stars? The Lord will cast you down even from that asylum! No! you will not desert us; you will blush at the name of fugitive, and traitor to your country!"

Even these forcible expostulations produced no effect. Surrounded by an enormous army swelled by constant reinforcements, nothing could inspire him with confidence. So paralysed was he with cowardice, that when the ice of a premature winter had frozen over the river between



him and the enemy, he took to a disgraceful and disorderly flight. Fortunately for him, his motives were not transparent to the multitude, who were removed too far from their prince to be able to judge critically of his conduct. Even had they beheld the abject despot trembling with fear while victory was within his grasp, yet their reverence for autocracy was so great, that they could not have felt anger or bitterness towards the throned representative of the race of Ruric.

Fortune conferred upon the dastard that success which brave and deserving men have too often failed to obtain. When his disgraceful flight threatened to bind faster upon the Russians those Tartar chains they had nearly cast aside, an unexpected incident turned the scale of victory. His lieutenant of Svenigorod, and his ally, the khan of the Crimea, advanced suddenly upon the Golden Horde, and carried their victorious arms into the very den of the Tartars. News of this movement soon reached the invading army, which made a precipitate retreat, with the object of averting the destruction which threatened the seat of its power. The khan and his forces were too late; the Russians had fallen like avengers upon the Golden Horde, slaughtering the Tartars they found there, and carrying off the treasures. No sooner had they retired than a band of marauding Tartars entered, and completed the work of devastation. They carried away the women, together with what wealth yet remained; and then retired, leaving the palace and other dwellings of the Golden Horde in flames. Yet another and still greater disaster fell upon the discomfited khan. His army was attacked, during its retreat, by a hetman of the Cossacks and the Murza of the Nogays, who fell upon its disorderly ranks with such fury, and used the sword with so merciless a severity, that scarcely a remnant of the invaders escaped. As an army they were destroyed; nothing was left of them but a disorganised and starving rabble. The Golden Horde was annihilated; the Tartar yoke was trampled into the dust; and the scourge of Russia was no more.

It might be supposed, that though Russia was jubilant, yet that the people regarded their sovereign with the scorn his cowardice merited. The very reverse was the case. Though his pusillanimity had almost brought ruin upon the empire, to him was given all the

honours of the unexpected success. It was even attributed to his wisdom and foresight. His credulous people believed that he had devised it all; and that even his flight was merely a snare to delude the foe. With a blind stupidity which excites astonishment, they now regarded Ivan as a man of profound genius; gifted alike in the field or the council-chamber. In the joy they felt at their deliverance from two centuries and a-half of national slavery, they were disposed almost to worship the grand prince as an incarnation of their new-born liberty!

The crafty Ivan resolved to profit by this error of his people. It enabled him to draw the bands of government tighter, and to increase his wealth and power. His fears vanished with the danger that caused them, and his ambitious acquisitiveness returned. He now directed his efforts to the subjugation of the republics of Viatka and Pskof, both of which he accomplished with little bloodshed, and rather by stratagem than power. Novgorod, enfeebled as it had been, was still occasionally agitated by recollections of its former liberty. Its citizens could not wear their chains patiently; and sometimes the crushed republic smouldered with the suppressed fires of revolution. Ivan resolved to tranquillise it after his own fashion. To do this, he seized every pretext for removing Novgorodian families to other parts of the empire, and supplying their places with parasites of his own. The city was at length exhausted of its original inhabitants, and filled by men penetrated with feelings of abject submission to the grand prince. Novgorod was quite transformed by this process. The city stood as before; but the proud freemen who once trod its streets had departed, and the groups who now traded and chaffered in them were slaves. Amidst all this craft and cruelty the interests of Russia were advancing; its consolidation was being promoted. It was necessary that the petty tyrants of the different principalities should fall before one great tyrant, that union might take the place of discord, and a great empire arise out of a number of small and ever-jarring states. It has been truly observed, that unless Ivan had broken all the ties of honour and humanity, and sacrificed the best feelings of his nature, he could not have subdued the insurgent population so effectually as to have bound up the whole in one sentiment of common national interest. Mean, unprincipled, and worthless as was



the man, the monarch accomplished an important labour, of a kind that better men would probably have failed to effect.

Some powerful and independent princes yet existed in Russia, and Ivan now resolved to weave his snares around them. He would have no independent appanages; he must reign supreme: Russia he desired to see one and undivided, and yet merely his footstool. Ivan had long foreseen and prepared for the contest on which he was about to enter; but his habitual cunning and deceptive bearing had prevented his intended victims from entertaining a suspicion of his purpose. This cold-hearted man ever smiled on those he meant to ruin; and disarmed them by a well-simulated bearing of gentleness, and even humility. For three-and-twenty years his Machiavelian patience recognised the right and independence of those princes whom he meant to despoil, and, if necessary, to crush. He would not encumber himself with quarrels at home while the Tartar power remained unbroken. When two of his brothers revolted, and withdrew with what forces they could collect into Lithuania, he implored their return with the most humble supplications. The motives for hypocrisy in this direction were now at an end, and he resolved to adopt a very different course. He did not wear a lion's robe, and patch it, when necessary, with the skin of the fox; but he wore a mantle of the skins of foxes, to which he added, when it was perfectly prudent to do so, some portions of the hide of the lion.

Throwing aside the mask he had worn so many years, Ivan commenced his designs upon the Prince of Twer, the most formidable of those who yet assumed a vain rivalry with the power and splendour of the grand principedom. In early life he had married a princess of the house of Twer, and a son was the result of the union. The tie had done much to restrain him in this direction; but his wife and son were both dead, and the thread of connection was severed. He had since married a Greek princess; and there was nothing now to excite emotions of kindness or forbearance. The principality of Twer was surrounded by his possessions, and he could threaten and strike at it from all sides. Having by some injustice goaded the Prince of Twer into the desperate resort of seeking assistance from the now enfeebled state of Lithuania, he charged its prince with trea-

son, and terrified him with the exhibition of an armed confederacy against him. Appalled by the armies that surrounded them on all sides, the inhabitants appealed to Ivan for forgiveness; which he consented to grant only on the payment of a tribute that enfeebled the whole territory. Thus, though he held the sword aloft and did not strike, yet he drained away the wealth and strength of his intended victim. He then excited disputes between the Muscovites and the Twerians; and made the latter feel their helplessness and insecurity to such an extent, that they were at length glad to purchase the protection of Ivan at the price of their independence. Their prince, robbed of his heritage and driven to despair, fled to Lithuania, where he died in exile, and, fortunately for the prosperous Ivan, without children to claim his dominions.

Ruler of Twer, the appanage of the powerful rivals of his house, the grand prince became an unapproachable autocrat. Those princes who yet retained their independence, saw that resistance was unavailing and submission unavoidable. Ivan no longer wore a mask of humility, but spoke in a voice of thunder. He knew his power, and he was inflexible. The terror of his name procured the immediate submission of the rulers of Rostof and Yaroslaf. Ivan extended his sceptre over their principalities, but permitted them still to retain their authority as governors appointed by him. The Prince of Vereia, in a vain attempt to avoid this confiscation, fled into Lithuania; but the autocrat punished his flight, by compelling the dying father of the fugitive to disinherit him of several cities, which Ivan appropriated to himself. Among the independent princes, were two brothers of the tyrant, on the annexation of whose dominions he was as much resolved as though the owners had been strangers to his blood. One of them surrendered his appanage sooner than expose himself to the dark machinations of so treacherous and remorseless a despot. The other, a man of an active nature and less disposed to submission, was invited by the grand prince to his court. There the unsuspecting guest, though received with smiles, was suddenly arrested and loaded with chains. In this painful position, he sunk under a too acute sense of impatience and the ignominy of the insult that had been offered to him, and expired. Ivan was seized with remorse when this intelligence was conveyed to him, and



he is said even to have wept over his murdered brother. It is with shame and anger we add, that the awakened voice of conscience was stifled by his bishops, who readily pacified his religious fears, and granted him a plenary absolution.

Ivan now sat upon an absolute throne. Those princes who, at the commencement of his reign, were almost as much sovereigns as himself, were either dead or banished, or had become transformed into obsequious servants. They mingled with the boyards—became in effect boyards themselves, and did not dare even to refer to that descent from Ruric which had once placed them on an equality with Ivan himself.

The life of the grand prince was one of ceaseless activity, and another opponent remained for him to subdue. This was Casimir, Duke of Poland, who, though a man of feeble character, had been the constant, though often indirect, adversary of Ivan for many years. While the hands of the latter were full of other business, he had let Casimir proceed; but he only delayed retribution that he might effect it with the greater certainty. Casimir had encouraged both Livonians and Tartars in their efforts against Russia, and had promoted rebellion in many of the Russian principalities, whose prince or people disliked the supremacy of Ivan. Indeed, the Polish duke pursued the same indirect policy as that followed by the Russian grand prince, and with a considerable amount of success. Ivan now commenced a war of artifices on the Duke of Poland, against whom he contrived alternately to excite many neighbouring potentates. His superior ability in the work of artifice was soon apparent. Casimir, however, died before he felt the full weight of his adversary's hand. On his demise, the duchy of Lithuania was divorced from the parent state, and separately organised under Prince Alexander; while the rest of the Polish territories were re-formed into a distinct government. Ivan saw that the time had now arrived for more decisive action. Poland weakened by division; Russia strengthened by concentration;—this was the time to recover those possessions which, in former times, the Lithuanians had wrested from his ancestors.

Having collected an enormous army, Ivan advanced towards Lithuania. As usual, he avoided fighting; but attempted to terrify his foes by the display of an overwhelming military superiority. At the

same time, his allies, Menghli-Ghirei, the khan of the Crimea, and the hospodar of Moldavia, assailed Lithuania in other directions. The device succeeded, and the unfortunate Prince of Lithuania was terrified into submission. A treaty was entered into, and Ivan bestowed the hand of his daughter upon his fallen adversary. This apparent generosity was only for the purpose of weaving a closer snare around his intended victim, and with the object of extirpating the Roman Catholic religion from Lithuania, and planting the Greek form of Christianity in its place. The lady was a zealous member of the Greek church, and she effectually executed the intention of her father; which was, by seeking all occasions to introduce her own faith, to produce religious dissensions between her husband, his people, and the Russians. As Prince Alexander was an ardent catholic and a man of narrow understanding, the result may be readily divined. He entered into some violent measures to defeat the designs of his wife, and thus gave the insidious Ivan a pretext for waging against him a war in the name of religion. This time the sword was not only drawn, but used. Ivan obtained a decisive victory, and then wrested from the defeated bigot the country as far as Kief and Smolensk, which had been taken from his ancestors by the then prosperous and powerful Lithuanians.

It was now that Ivan, naturally elated by his many triumphs, adopted a title which was regarded as more august and important than that of grand prince. It was that of Tzar, or, as custom now almost universally renders it in other European countries, Czar. Some obscurity rests upon the origin and precise meaning of this Asiatic and semi-barbarous sounding title. It was generally presumed to have been a corruption of the word Cæsar; but this supposition is laid aside. Philological critics have now pronounced that it is an old oriental word, which the Russians acquired through the Slavonic translation of the Bible, and which they at first bestowed upon the Greek emperors, and afterwards upon the Tartar khans. In Persia, it signifies a throne, or supreme authority; and it is to be found in the termination of the names of the kings of Assyria and Babylon; such as Phalassar, Nabonassar, Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar. To the Russian subjects of Ivan's time, as of ours, supreme authority, or power derived



from God, and only controllable by him, was the signification of the term. It is strange that this pusillanimous monarch should not only have raised the power of the Russian sovereignty to a height that his predecessors seem scarcely to have contemplated, but should have established a religiously guarded despotism on the part of the prince, and a sense of the religious duty of passive obedience on that of the people, which have existed to this hour. How true is it, that institutions are but the lengthened shadow of one man. A crafty despot prepares his people for passive slavery; while a liberal monarch inspires them with a love of rational freedom, and a desire for advancement in those arts which, on the one hand, create magnificence and abundance, and on the other, tend to the amelioration both of poverty and disease.

"On looking back," said a modern historian, "at the progress of Ivan's career towards this unexampled elevation, while we discover much that is referable to that combination of favourable accidents which usually occurs to those who least stand in need of extraneous help, we also find much that was produced by a *calm and persevering spirit* incessantly engaged in the calculation of the chances of every movement, and which took advantage of the most trifling circumstance that could be turned to the credit of the great account. Pusillanimous by nature, Ivan had the larger leisure for maturing his intrigues; and, by the exercise of a system of stratagems in an age when physical force was the common appeal of nations, he vanquished his antagonists by bearing down on those points where they were the least prepared for resistance. Nor did he lose sight of the leading features of national superstition. He carefully sounded the depths of the Russian character; and, availing himself of the weaknesses of the

people, did not suffer a solitary occasion to pass away without reaping from it some personal benefit under the mask of the public good. Thus, when he hung back on the banks of the Lugra, and fled from an inferior force, he converted his disgrace to a glory, and was rewarded by the admiration and idolatry of his countrymen, who conferred upon him all the applause of a signal triumph, in which he not only had no share, but from which he turned in dismay. There was less, too, of cruelty than of artifice in his nature; for although he never scrupled to execute summary and sanguinary vengeance where other means failed, yet he always deferred the adoption of such an alternative to the last extremity. This exhibition of placidity, which really sprang from a secret misgiving as to results, contributed in a great measure to check any ebullitions of popular distrust, if not to establish his empire more firmly in the goodwill of the people. Even the violation of his promises, usually justified by some plausible pretext of a patriotic description, and his reckless conduct towards the enemies of his throne and his religion, were easily excused by a population that began to be accustomed to the apparent interpositions of Divine Providence on behalf of their sovereign. They were induced, without much trouble, to believe that the prince who was so highly favoured by heaven, could not receive too much confidence and gratitude from man."

We have alluded to the marriage of Ivan with a Greek princess. This union was the result of his subtle policy and farséeing views. When, in 1453, Constantinople had fallen before the power of the sultan, Mahommed II., and the last of the Greek emperors, after exhibiting a nobility of conduct which contrasted painfully with the miserable cowardice of his people,\* fell

\* In the pages of Gibbon, the historic reader will find a gorgeous word-picture of the fall of Constantinople, and abundant accounts of the selfishness, timidity, and superstition of its people. We quote a brief but remarkable passage:—"On the assurance of the public calamity, the houses and convents were instantly deserted; and the trembling inhabitants flocked together in the streets, like a herd of timid animals, as if accumulated weakness could be productive of strength, or in the vain hope that, amid the crowd, each individual might be safe and invisible. From every part of the capital they flowed into the church of St. Sophia; in the space of an hour the sanctuary, the choir, the nave, the upper and lower galleries were filled with the multitude of fathers and husbands, of women and children. of

priests, monks, and religious virgins: the doors were barred on the inside, and they sought protection from the sacred dome, which they had so lately abhorred as a profane and polluted edifice. Their confidence was founded on the prophecy of an enthusiast or impostor—that one day the Turks should enter Constantinople, and pursue the people as far as the column of Constantine, in the square before St. Sophia; but that this would be the term of their calamities: that an angel would descend from heaven, with a sword in his hand, and would deliver the empire, with that celestial weapon, to a poor man seated at the foot of the column. 'Take this sword,' would he say, 'and avenge the people of the Lord.' At these animating words the Turks would instantly fly, and the victorious Greeks would drive



beneath the swords of the Janizaries, the last princess of the imperial family had fled for shelter to what were regarded as the sacred walls of Rome. Ivan sought the hand of the lady, and entreated the pope's consent to their union. He was not unaware of the possible, though remote, advantages of the connection. The example of Vladimir I. was not lost upon him: though Constantinople had passed from the possession of the effeminate Greeks into the hands of a fierce and warlike race, who should say what the future might bring forth? It would be, at least, well that his descendants should be capable of putting forward a claim to be the representatives of the family of the last Greek emperor of Constantinople. So Ivan sought and gained the hand of the Greek princess, content though her only dowry was the imperial effigy of the two-headed eagle—the symbol of autocratic power. Such a thing might seem trifling and worthless, but it was not so in the estimation of the self-created czar. He designed that the Grecian princess should introduce into the regal palace at Moscow the haughty hierarchy of the sumptuous court of Constantine, and its pompous ceremonies; in a word, that despotism of divine right by which the slavish devotedness to the prince who then reigned in Russia should be strengthened and sanctified. The Russian priesthood, delighted to receive a royal fugitive from the now broken fountain whence they had derived their religion, welcomed her with a chorus of adulation, and declared that she was sent by the Deity. "God sends him," said they of Ivan, "this illustrious spouse, an offset of that imperial tree, the shadow of which was formerly spread over all orthodox Christian brothers. Fortunate alliance! which brings to mind that of the great Vladimir, and which will make another Byzantium of Moscow, and give to its grand princes all the rights of the Greek emperors!"

The craft of Ivan, and the flatteries of his priests and courtiers, tended to inspire their descendants with dreams of conquest and aggrandisement, which it had been better, both for them and for Europe, had never risen in the cradles of their souls. Yet the presence of the Greek princess gradually

exerted a favourable, and probably almost unsuspected, influence upon Russia. The triumph of the Turks over Constantinople had destroyed the commerce of that mighty city, and of the empire of which it was the head. The polished Greeks who fled from their native city, now sought protection in the capital whose sovereign had received to his couch the daughter of their fallen emperor. With them they brought those arts and sciences, for the exercise of which their nation was so distinguished. Russia thus received an impetus in civilisation, in elegance of taste, and in commercial prosperity. She was drawn closer to her European neighbours, who had hitherto disregarded her as a chaotic power, utterly sunk in barbarism. Ivan had been altogether occupied in snaring or crushing enemies abroad and at home. At length he had leisure for a task probably more in accordance with his unwarlike nature. He dreaded bloodshed, and used his sword rather as statesmen do the pen. He used it less as a weapon to smite with, than as an instrument to terrify and circumvent his foes. Now, this necessary labour accomplished, he turned his attention to the study of the policy of European courts, and to pondering on the mode by which he should elevate his throne to an equality with the proudest and most powerful among them.

To forward this design, he employed great numbers of architects and artists to erect the magnificent regal residence called the Kremlin—a city of palaces and churches, which still stands the glory and pride of the people of Moscow, and the admiration of all strangers. The Kremlin has necessarily been much enlarged and added to since its first erection; but the original design had much of grandeur in its gigantic massiveness. "If," says a modern traveller, "the giant whom we call the Russian empire had a heart, I should say that the Kremlin was the heart of this monster." Men gifted in the arts and sciences were invited from Germany and Italy. Amongst them were miners and engineers, architects, founders, and minters. The mines of Petchora were worked for the first time, and new money, in silver and copper, coined

them from the west, and from all Anatolia, as far as the frontiers of Persia. It is on this occasion that Ducas, with some fancy and much truth, upbraids the discord and obstinacy of the Greeks. 'Had that angel appeared,' exclaims the historian—'had he

offered to exterminate your foes if you would consent to the union of the church (i.e., the Greek and Roman forms of Christianity), even then, in that fatal moment, you would have rejected your safety, or have deceived your God.'



at Moscow. The arts and sciences, though not destined to flourish for centuries in the cold regions of Russia, yet took a shallow and feeble root there.\* A new idea of life was opened to the rude minds of the people by gorgeous public entertainments, pageants, and processions.

In his communications with the polished courts of the great powers of Europe, Ivan was extremely anxious to convey an idea of his power and dignity. He carried this feeling so far, as sometimes to offend where he wished to conciliate. For a slight omission of formalities he refused to receive the envoy of Austria, and even drove him from his presence. He eventually compelled the emperor to treat him as his equal; and when that monarch offered to confer on him the title of king, he replied haughtily, "that he would not degrade himself by receiving titles from any prince on earth, and that he held his crown from God alone!" His powerful neighbours, the Turks, then a source of dread to nearly all Europe, he would not suffer to commit wrong in any way towards him or his subjects without reproof. Some Russian merchants having been injured by the Turks of Kaffa, he demanded redress from the Sultan Bajazet, to whom he sent this message:—"Whence do these acts of violence arise? Are you aware of them, or are you not? One word more. Mahommed, your father, was a great prince; he intended to have sent ambassadors to me to pay me a compliment, but God prevented the execution of his project. Why should it not now be

accomplished?" At a later period, he commanded his ambassador at the court of the sultan carefully to avoid compromising the dignity of his master; to address the sultan standing, and not upon his knees, as had been the custom; and never to yield precedence to the representative of any other nation.

Although Ivan had degraded the boyards by employing them in servile offices about his person, yet he sometimes found it necessary to make them feel the extent of his power, and of their weakness in comparison with it. When they contended together for offices and for precedence, he checked their restless vanity with the remark, that "they ought to submit without a murmur to the will of their sovereign, and that when the question related to his service, every office was good." But the discontents of the boyards were not confined to trifles of this nature. The privileges they had enjoyed through the dissensions of the princes had been enormous; and they became aware that much of their power was melting away beneath the firm rule of Ivan. This feeling was cautiously shown on many occasions; and on one, it burst out into something more than a violent remonstrance against the continuance of a state of things which was slowly changing the form of government in Russia. On the death of the czar's eldest son, the result of his first marriage, they addressed Ivan in what he deemed a tone of unseemly vehemence, and implored him to confer the succession upon his grandson

\* Sir Archibald Alison appears to think that literature, the arts and sciences, will never flourish in Russia, but that that empire will for ages, if not for ever, remain a nursery of military strength, ready to be used as "the scourge of vicious civilisation." His opinion, from which we entirely dissent, is thus expressed:—"What, then, is the destiny of Russia?—for a destiny, and that a great one, she evidently has. Her rapid growth and ceaseless progress, through all the mutations of fortune, in the adjoining states, clearly bespeak not only consummate wisdom of general internal direction, but the evolutions of a mighty design. She is probably not intended to shine in the career of civilisation. Her sons will not, at least for long, rival the arts of Italy or the chivalry of France, the intellect of England, or the imagination of Germany. There will be no Shakespeares or Miltons, no Racines or Corneilles, no Tassos or Raphaels, no Schillers or Goethes, amidst the countless millions of her boundless territory [*this is bold and baseless prophecy, merely the idle declamation of an accomplished mind*]; but there may be—there will be—an Alexander, an Attila, a Timour. Literature, science, the arts, are the efflorescence of civilisation; but in the moral, not less

than in the physical world, efflorescence is succeeded by decline, the riches of the harvest border on the decay of autumn. There is a winter in nations as well as in seasons."—*History of Europe* (Continuation, vol. ii.) In the same passage in which Sir A. Alison so confidently predicts that Russia will reverse the action of natural laws which govern the progress of nations, and go backward into the past, instead of forward into the future, he speaks of that great empire as saved from the corruption of that civilisation to which it has not attained, and the vices of which it is from time to time to correct by means of brute power. Russia the teacher of political virtue! Russia spared from the corruption of civilisation! Why, political and judicial corruption, in their meanest and most abject forms, are the curse of the Russian empire; while its history, from the time of Catherine to the present hour, shows its social life blasted by sensuality and dishonesty. Russia has yet much to learn from civilisation before she need fear being corrupted by it; and she must study to restrain and govern herself, before she assumes the task which properly belongs to Deity alone—that of scourging the vices of surrounding nations.



Dmitri, whom they doubtless hoped to be able to mould according to their desires. The czar angrily refused, and even threw his grandson into prison. The boyards then resorted to stratagem and calumny, and spread many evil reports concerning the Greek czarina, the mother of the second son. So craftily were they framed, that even the far-seeing Ivan was for a while led to believe them. Acting upon this conviction, he publicly disgraced his wife, and releasing his grandson Dmitri from prison, caused him to be solemnly crowned as his successor. The czar, however, soon discovered the designs of the boyards, and the innocence of the Greek princess, and he at once restored her to liberty and his favour. He also excluded the grandson who had so recently been crowned as his successor, and proclaimed his son to be his heir. There was a whimsical rapidity about these proceedings that was not calculated to allay disaffection. The boyards were not inclined to abandon the struggle; and they succeeded in stirring up the inhabitants of Pskof to expostulate with the czar in behalf of the elder branch, against the heir whom he had chosen. Ivan inquired haughtily, "Am I not then at liberty to act as I please?" Then he added, in the spirit of that unreasoning despotism which regards itself as above the judgment of men, "I will give Russia to whom I think proper, and I command you to obey."

The boyards who had been most actively concerned in the conspiracy against the czarina, were seized by command of Ivan, and several of them were beheaded. The high rank of their order had hitherto protected its members from such summary violence, and the people beheld with astonishment acts which showed the vast power of the czar, and the apparently inevitable fate of those who had the temerity to oppose it. The rest who had incurred his displeasure he degraded in their rank, and reduced to a situation of court servitude. Amongst other means of limiting their consequence, he took away their ancient privilege of transferring their service to any other prince possessed of an appanage, and rigidly forbade their removal from such offices about his own court, or elsewhere, as he thought proper to select for them.

One of his latest acts of public interest was a collision with the Russian priesthood. Few sovereigns have been able to overcome clerical opposition, and many have fallen

before it; but the wise autocrat proved himself equal to this emergency also. It has been well said, that "if in the field he betrayed a lack of nerve, in the cabinet he showed a degree of imperturbability which invested him with impunity. The waive of his hand, and the sound of his voice, were decisive. No impediments retarded, no resistance repelled him." He effected some reforms in the manners of the Russian priesthood; but the particular occasion which brought him into opposition with them, was the appearance of a startling Jewish heresy amongst them. Its tenets were remarkable, and, to the dispassionate critics of our time, have an air of grotesque absurdity. But it is wise to judge charitably in these matters; for all history shows us, that religious fanaticism and its attendant extravagancies, frequently enter even into the highest order of intellects, and leave their votaries, on this point, the victims of a gloomy and immovable monomania. The Mosaic novelties which had stolen into the Russian church were indeed of a serious nature, and altogether incompatible with the profession of the Christian faith. They consisted in a denial of the divinity of Jesus, and of the Virgin Mary; in the unseemly acts of spitting on the images of saints, and tearing them with the teeth; in a disbelief of paradise and a resurrection of the dead; and in placing an implicit faith in a certain book, which it was audaciously said had been given, by the Deity himself, to Adam. From that book the credulous advocates of the new principles maintained that Solomon had derived all his wisdom; and Moses, Joseph, Elias, and Daniel, their power over the elements and monsters, their skill in the interpretation of dreams, and their faculty of looking into futurity. The Messiah, it was declared, was yet to come, as the Hebrew prophecies concerning him remained unfulfilled. Zosimus, the primate, was understood to be the chief professor of these heresies, in which he was followed by the great bulk of the Russian priesthood.

Some of those who yet remained true to the Christian faith as it had hitherto been generally received in the country, proclaimed their horror and indignation. A pious fanatic of some distinction, known as St. Joseph of Volok, thus vehemently demanded the punishment of the misbelievers:—"We see," he exclaimed, "a son of Satan seated on the throne of the holy



prelates; we see a devouring wolf under the garb of a simple shepherd! They are no more; they have flown to the bosom of Christ, those daring eagles of religion, those godly bishops, who would have pitilessly torn out with their talons every eye that was bold enough to look askance on the divinity of the Saviour. Now, in the garden of the church, we hear nothing but the hiss of a horrible reptile, which vomits forth blasphemy against the Lord, and against his blessed Mother."

The czar had far too much prudence to permit him to go to any of the extremities indicated in this theological denunciation. Had he persecuted the new doctrines with any great degree of severity, they would infallibly have taken root, and endured for at least many generations. He probably cared but little for the purity of the church; but he had certain political reasons for wishing to extirpate the strange heresies which had appeared within it. If the most vital doctrines of religion were disregarded, he knew that the throne could not easily retain its alleged sanctity. Novelty was the nurse of restlessness and change, alike in religion or politics; and Ivan desired no changes except such as he himself had brought about. These were all of an autocratic character, in which the person of the sovereign was invested with something akin to divine power, and the church was converted into a sort of pious outwork around the throne. Ivan therefore caused the heresy to be anathematised; appointed a new primate, whose inauguration he himself somewhat significantly performed;\* and banished the heretics from the empire, after confiscating their property, and adroitly converting it to his own use. Such measures, severe though calm, no doubt created great excitement; but the clergy were awed, and submitted. The Eastern doctrine of fatalism permeated through their religious tenets; and of what use would it be to resist a man whose supremacy, they reasoned, was preordained by Him "who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters; who maketh the clouds his chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the wind!"

Ivan did not neglect the internal condition of the empire. A system of order and

classification was made to extend to everything. A more equitable system of taxation relieved the people of those burdens to which they had been frequently subjected by the caprice of their immediate lord. The roads were repaired, and the police and army more regularly organised. The right of the peasantry to change their servitude from one lord or fief to another, on payment of a certain tax, was clearly defined. This was an important matter; for it was the subsequent abolition of this privilege by Boris Godunof that led to the conversion of the Russian peasantry into serfs—an act pregnant with mischief, which at the time remained unseen. The power of the boyards over their followers was limited, by associating with them in their judicial rights the elders of the districts and the established civil functionary. Thus, though Russia was far behind the rest of Europe, yet some faint colouring of civilisation began to appear in it. In 1497, Ivan collected the existing ordinances and customs of the country into a code, of which, though it was probably suited to the age, it has been observed, everything partook of the keenness of the sword, which was brought into action in every part of it. The majority of criminal offences were decided by the ancient and unreasonable practice of single combat, and torture was used for the extortion of evidence. Other punishments chiefly consisted in the knout, confiscation of the criminal's property, condemnation to slavery in the mines, and death. So little hesitation was there to proceed to the latter extremity, that when a thief was detected in a second offence, he was executed at once without any formality.

Ivan's reign was prolonged for three-and-forty years, a length of time which enabled him to accomplish all the reforms and changes he effected in the state. He died in 1505, at the age of sixty-seven. Though a contemplation of his character may make us recoil with disgust as we would from some venomous reptile, yet it must be conceded that this heartless, unprincipled, and monstrously selfish man had, in some indirect way, a claim upon the title of Great, which was conferred upon him by his people, and even admitted by foreigners. Yet, perhaps, paradox as the assertion may seem, there never existed a man whose mind was more deficient in the elements of true greatness. Insincere, indeed false to everything but himself and the one great idea which he laboured all his life to pro-

\* Implying thereby that the church derived its power and dignity from him, not he his power and dignity from the church. Ivan professed to receive his authority directly from the hands of God, or, as he said at another time, from the Holy Trinity.



mote—actually loving falsehood rather than truth—the man was a living, aggregate, incarnate lie. A coward in adversity, a despot in prosperity, a shuffler at all times. Yet this strange man went patiently forward, and laboured incessantly at the exaltation of his country!—did it also, not only with craft, but with wisdom! Yet all his work was contaminated by his vices, and, most of all, by his cold, unmovable selfishness. He created order in Russia; but it was the order resulting from a sense of fear, and a habit of abject submission. He had no thought of bringing into being a great *people*; for them he had no feeling, save that they were to be ruled for his advantage and that of his successors. A great *empire* was what he had laboured for—one of such extent and resources, that its sovereigns should not stand second to any of the potentates of the civilised world. His plans were often promoted by a favourable combination of circumstances; but he had the faculty of pursuing them with an unwearied tenacity. Russia owed him much; but she also owed to him that servile, broken spirit, which to this hour is prevalent among the lower orders of the

people. Two centuries and a-half of Tartar tyranny had doubtless done much to debase the character of the masses, and extinguish their spirit; but the policy of Ivan finished what the hand of an enemy had begun. He wanted subjects, but not a people; and he obtained his wish at the price of the extinction of popular spirit. He wanted empire, and he obtained it: during his reign 19,000 square miles and 4,000,000 subjects were added to the already immense territories of Russia. He strove also to promote the arts and to forward civilisation, and his character was not tainted by cruelty. He was despotically severe at times, but he generally seemed to shrink from shedding blood. The sword and the axe, if it must be; but they were his last alternatives. That was a negative virtue, certainly; and it may also be said that, in some measure, the time had need of the man. Evil, oppressive, and even mean work was to be done for the good of Russia; and he did it with a will. For the rest, he was a wise sovereign—much in the same way that a crowned lagoon would have been one: he pursued the interest of Russia just so far as it was identical with his own.

## CHAPTER XI.

THE REIGN OF VASSILI IVANOVITCH; CONTESTS WITH THE TARTARS; DEATH OF VASSILI, AND REGENCY OF HELENA; HER EXCESSES AND ASSASSINATION; ILL-TREATMENT OF THE YOUNG CZAR IVAN, AFTERWARDS SURNAMED "THE TERRIBLE;" HIS YOUTHFUL CRUELITIES PROMOTE INSURRECTION AT MOSCOW; REFORMATION OF IVAN; HE ADVANCES AGAINST KASAN, AND CONVERTS THE MOSQUES INTO CHRISTIAN CHURCHES; ANNEXATION OF ASTRACAN; DISCOVERY AND CONQUEST OF SIBERIA; PRINTING INTRODUCED INTO RUSSIA; RETURN OF THE FEROCITY OF IVAN; HE PUTS HIS VIRTUOUS ADVISERS TO DEATH; HE RETIRES TO THE FORTRESS OF ALEXANDROVSKY; DENOUNCES THE CLERGY AND THE BOYARDS; AWFUL MASSACRES AT NOVGOROD; FRIGHTFUL EXECUTIONS AT MOSCOW; IVAN IS DEPRIVED OF TERRITORIES BY FOREIGN FOES; HE SEEKS THE HAND OF QUEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND; HE MURDERS HIS ELDEST SON; HIS DEATH AND CHARACTER.

No opposition was offered to the succession of the son of the late monarch, nor was any effort made on behalf of his grandson Dmitri. Vassili Ivanovitch, the son of Ivan, by the czarina Sophia, of Byzantium, ascended the throne of the grand principedom in 1505, and occupied it for eight-and-twenty comparatively uneventful years. His character appears to have borne some resemblance to that of his father, whose principles of government he addressed himself

to carrying out. It may, however, be inferred, that he did not possess the profound craft, restless energy, and political wisdom of his predecessor; for history is almost silent concerning him. No great act, or remarkable saying, is recorded of him; and he either possessed a mind which, except in the exhibition of a serpent-like and venomous cunning, scarcely rose above the almost stagnant level of mediocrity, or the chroniclers of his nation have been unjust



to his memory. Still, whatever were his deficiencies, he has drawn from the historian Ségur the flattering comment, "That he maintained the dignity of the empire bequeathed to him by his father, and enlarged its extent." Perhaps it would be more correct to say, that the fabric of Ivan's government stood and worked well for a time by virtue of its own strength.

For some years before Ivan the Crafty (a far more appropriate surname for him than that of Great) went to his grave, he was disturbed by the turbulence of the Tartars of Kasan. These people submitted with an ill-will to his authority, which they resolved to cast off on the first opportunity. Not caring to conceal their rebellious temper, they proceeded so far as to set up a new khan, in defiance of the authority of the czar. Ever averse to a resort to the sword, and probably influenced by unpleasant reminiscences of Tartar strength and ferocity, Ivan pretended to acquiesce pleasantly in this disregard of his power; but, with his customary duplicity, appointed a Russian boyard with the nominal duty of assisting the khan in the administration, but with the real one of neutralising his authority. The Tartars understood this well enough; but, awed by the increasing power of Ivan, they sullenly submitted to what they could not readily avoid. The calm produced by such a state of things, however, resembles the oppressive tranquillity which precedes the eruption of a volcanic mountain; and the rule of the prince who holds his authority by so uncertain a bond, is about as secure as the peasant who, on the eve of the fiery outburst, sleeps in apathy in his cot at the mountain's base. The death of Ivan gave the Tartars of Kasan the opportunity they desired, and the repressed feelings of animosity burst forth. This turbulent people rose in insurrection, and murdered the representative of Russian authority.

Vassili had no alternative but to resort to arms: his father might plot and equivocate with safety; but it was necessary for a prince who had yet to acquire distinction, to act. Accordingly, in 1508, he sent a great army, under the command of his brother, to reduce the Tartars of Kasan to obedience. At first the Russians gained a doubtful victory over their foes; but a second battle was fought, in which they sustained an unequivocal defeat. The Tartars, inflated with the consciousness of victory, were encour-

aged to attempt some more daring exploit. Having induced the Tartars of the Crimea to join them, they invaded Russia in great strength, and even penetrated as far as the gates of Moscow. During this marauding expedition, it is said they made prisoners of the unarmed population to the almost incredible number of 300,000, whom they afterwards disposed of as slaves to the Turks. We are inclined to suspect exaggeration in this statement; but there can be no doubt that this horde of semi-savages, whose chief object was plunder, inflicted an enormous amount of misery upon the unhappy Russians, whom Vassili left without protection. The czar, whose cowardice and meanness on this occasion almost went beyond that of his father in early life, purchased the forbearance and departure of the Tartars by costly bribes and dishonourable promises of submission! Yes, incredible as it may seem in an independent sovereign, he had the abject baseness to promise that he would take a new oath of allegiance to them. We scarcely think it lessens his offence against common manliness, and his treason against the prostrate dignity of his people, that he never intended to keep his word. Vile and worthless as were the Tartars—a race whom it would have been a mercy to mankind to exterminate, as the pioneers of civilisation do droves of famished wolves—yet it is almost a matter of regret that this man eventually neutralised his own submission, and, by falsehood and cunning, triumphed over his foes. More by stratagems than force of arms, he eventually recaptured Kasan, and made severe examples of the most distinguished insurgents. This event did not take place for many years, during which time the regal coward patiently nursed his anger. In 1523 he attempted to wreak his vengeance upon the Tartars, but his army was repulsed with disgrace. Seven years later he was more fortunate: Kasan was taken by his troops; the fortress destroyed by fire; and, it is affirmed, no less than 60,000 of the Tartars massacred.

During the continuance of this struggle, the city of Pskof exhibited expiring signs of independence, and made some efforts to separate itself from the empire. It was in vain; the time of petty principedoms and small republican states was past in Russia. The tendency of events had set in towards consolidation and despotism; and resistance on the part of small states was useless. It



showed no statesmanlike skill on the part of Vassili, that he was able to reduce the feeble city which strove vainly to rear itself against him. Even this poor exploit was done by stratagem. He drained away the flower of the population by exhausting military levies; he absorbed the wealth of the citizens by burdensome taxes, and crushed their commerce by heavy restrictions. Pskof, utterly debilitated, sunk still deeper beneath that Muscovite rule from which she had thoughtlessly, and without calculation, attempted to emancipate herself. The only other event of importance during this reign was the annexation of Severia, the last principality which maintained an independent existence. Having sat for eight-and-twenty years in the seat of the czar, and sullied the title during that period by the meanness of his nature, Vassili died in 1533. Insignificant as he appears to have been, his reign tended to the consolidation of the empire; for the machinery of government set in action by his father, was permitted silently to take its course. For himself he would have been one of those who come and go upon the earth unhonoured and unheeded—mere living bubbles, floating for a brief space in the sunlight—but for the accident of his having been born to wear a crown.

Vassili was succeeded by his son Ivan Vasilovitch, an infant of only three years old. The early years of this young prince were rendered miserable by those who little deemed that he would extort a merciless revenge for the indignities and sufferings they then heaped upon him. Who, in a handsome child, could have recognised the future Nero of Russia—the monster whose atrocious cruelties appalled his people, and astonished those of surrounding states? But, unhappily, Ivan is far from being the only instance in which an oppressed infancy has ripened into a depraved manhood.

The tender age of the czar rendered a regency imperative; and Helena, his mother, assumed the actual responsibility of government. She was an unprincipled and worthless woman, who offended the boyards by her insolence, and disgusted the nation by her licentiousness. Her dignity she shared with a paramour, whose injudicious elevation to such a rank was naturally regarded as an insult by the princes and nobles of the empire. To the education and future interests of her son this sensual woman was altogether indifferent: she lived but for the pleasures or the passions of the passing hour,

and he was but a gilded property by which she obtained their gratification.

A feeling of discontent was general among the princes and boyards. They were not reconciled to the loss of that inordinate authority which had been wrung from them by Ivan the Crafty, and kept from them by his less able son. What was the consolidation and peace of the empire to them, who, regardless of the claims of country, or the feelings of patriotism, sought only for individual distinction and aggrandisement? "Formerly," says Ségur, "the whole empire was the theatre of their ambition; its partition into appanages, their end; civil war, their means: but now that was all concentrated in the prince, their sole arena was his court; their end, the precarious power derived from favouritism; their means, intrigue." They longed for a pretext to take advantage of the infancy of the czar, so that they might seize upon the empire, and divide it amongst themselves. Such a pretext was furnished by the dissolute conduct of the regent, and a conspiracy was formed amongst many of the princes and boyards. Favourable as the time seemed for a movement of this nature, no opportunity offered for a general outbreak. The overbearing conduct of the conspirators led to a betrayal of their designs, and the regent was enabled to strike the first blow. Three uncles of the infant czar were the principal plotters against his interests, and these Helena seized, on the ground that they entertained designs upon the throne. Once in her power, they were thrown into loathsome prisons, in which they soon breathed their last, whether in the course of nature, or in consequence of secret outrage, is known but to God. They died; and the most active of their followers were punished by torture, death, or imprisonment. The other conspirators, alarmed at a degree of energy they did not anticipate, fled for safety to Lithuania or the Crimea.

For five years of anarchy the regent maintained her position by the exercise of a ferocious cruelty. During this time she showed herself a fitting mother of the child whom her neglect was assisting to mature into a monster. It has often been said, that those men whom the world regards as its great ones, have usually been born of gifted women. The same rule, doubtless, holds good in cases of most abandoned depravity or gigantic crime. In this instance, the wretch whose diabolic cruelty earned for him the repulsive title of "The Terrible,"



was the son of a woman who was not only a libel upon her sex, but a disgrace to humanity. It was her delight to appal and agonise her enemies by torture before she extinguished them in death. But her five years of power ended, and the hour of retribution came. She died suddenly! Yes, indeed, suddenly; but her death was anticipated and designed. The boyards, whom the high-placed wanton had terrified by her cruelty, had poisoned her. If by some superhuman power we could learn aught of the dark secrets of the buried past, it would be an instructive thing to know something of the last hours and words of such a woman as this: a wild sermon that, we think; which might cause a shudder in the guilty whom hitherto no precept could reach, no warning touch.

The czar was still in his infancy, and it was necessary to appoint some person or party to conduct the affairs of the empire. It was confided to, or rather seized upon by, a member of the factious boyards, who dignified themselves with the title of the "supreme council." The president of this body was Prince Schuisky, a coarse-minded, brutal noble, in whom vulgar audacity struggled for pre-eminence with dangerous ambition. The turbulent disposition of the family of this man had long made them disliked and shunned by the czar as enemies of the state; and Schuisky now resolved to resent, upon a mere child, the supposed injuries his relatives had received from former sovereigns. He brought up the young Ivan altogether without education; subjected him to numerous insults; even lolled upon his bed; and, on one occasion, insolently placed his feet in the lap of the boy sovereign. Child as the latter was, he felt these slights bitterly, and resolved to repay them when time should really place the power of the sceptre in his hands.

The supreme council of the boyards speedily showed themselves unequal to the successful conduct of the affairs of state. The feeling of patriotism was a stranger to the bosoms of these rude and selfish men. Each pursued his own interest, and confusion and mutual distrust was the result of their deliberations. Everywhere the people became a prey to petty tyrants; and it seemed as if Russia would recede to that barbarism from which she had been so slowly emerging. The treasury of the young czar was plundered, his dominions encroached upon, and himself only tolerated in his own palace,

where not he, but the boyards were masters. In this state of things the country was infested by large bodies of wandering Tartars, who robbed and murdered the unprotected people. These unchecked excesses encouraged the Tartars to attempt an invasion on a scale of actual warfare; but the council, startled at the danger, united for once; and the Tartars, who were but the shadow of their ancient power, were repulsed. Prince Belsky and the Russian primate, who both appear to have been actuated by honourable motives, endeavoured after this to restore order, and for a time they were successful—for a brief time only: their patriotic exertions elicited the hatred of their compeers; for even the presence of virtue is a reproof to those who are devoid of it. A cabal was formed against the primate and the prince. The former was ill-treated and deposed; and the latter thrown into prison and murdered there.

The turbulent Prince Schuisky and his companions had been displaced from their power on the invasion of the Tartars; but shortly before the overthrow of the primate and the murder of Belsky, they reappeared and recovered their influence by force of arms. In the month of January, 1542, they surprised Moscow in the dead of night, made themselves masters of the city, and entering the palace, penetrated even to the bedside of the young czar, and rousing him suddenly from sleep with alarming shouts, endeavoured to overthrow his intellect through the influence of sudden terror.

Such was the early life of one born to the eventual possession of absolute power! The young czar, neglected, insulted, and treated with brutality, was an object of pity. When he exhibited, for a short time, some natural and genial feeling of early life, his persecutors scoffed at the generous emotion. Grief for his dead mother was for Schuisky and his satellites a theme for laughter. When, on one occasion, he formed an attachment to a young boyard, they fell upon the latter in the presence of Ivan, and beat him with a malignant fury. These cruelties were producing their natural result. The young Ivan became at first morose, then savage and vindictive. All that was evil in the boy ripened with a diseased rapidity: his wholesome feelings seemed to freeze up and perish within him; while a natural tendency to brutal actions was encouraged by his abandoned misleaders. He soon began to love mischief and brutality for the



excitement they afforded him. The development of such a mind must be a curious psychological study for the philosopher; but the pursuit of so speculative a theme would be out of place here. His childhood had been cheerless enough; and the earliest amusements in which he indulged were disgusting. They consisted in riding furiously over old men and women, and trampling even children beneath the feet of his horses; in throwing stones at the passers-by; in tormenting wild animals, and in hurling cats and dogs from the summit of his palace. These barbarities were applauded by the brutal Prince Schuisky, who trusted, by encouraging such debasing deeds, to bring up the czar to be an idiotic tool in his hands. The wretch was mistaken: he was but sharpening a weapon of which he was to be the earliest victim; and digging a pit for another, which was destined to become his own grave!

The uneducated Ivan possessed far more intellect than the dull Prince Schuisky imagined. The latter appears to have been a man not distinguished in any way for ability, and who procured his transient supremacy merely by audacity and the exercise of brutal force. Ivan had carefully treasured up a remembrance of the insults he had received at the hands of this man; and at length the hour of repayment arrived. Schuisky had not the intellect to appreciate the force of that fierce yet boyish *will* which, now rapidly developing itself, was soon to crush him. He was blind to the meaning of the ferocious glare which sometimes lighted up the eyes of the young czar when engaged in his diabolical sports. Ivan was only in his thirteenth year; but royal children are usually almost unnaturally precocious. One day he was engaged at a hunting party, which comprised amongst its members Schuisky (the president of the council) and a Prince Gluisky, who regarded him with emotions of jealousy and hatred. Gluisky was anxiously on the watch for some incident which might be used to promote the ruin of his rival. During the chase he prompted the young czar to address Schuisky in words of command and insult. The astonished president, who thought he had effectually intimidated his sovereign, replied in an angry manner. Backed by his new friend, Ivan exhibited the native fury of his disposition. He gave the command to his followers, who, rushing upon Schuisky, hurled him amongst the

dogs. The fierce brutes, encouraged by the hunters, tore the guilty wretch limb from limb, and speedily devoured him. Thus the ruffian who depraved the mind of a youthful sovereign, and exposed his infancy to constant insults and terrors, met with a fate which, despite its appalling nature, we are compelled to say he deserved.

Though rid of an oppressor and master, the boy-czar fell beneath the ascendancy of another too powerful subject. This was Prince Gluisky, who now became the leader of the administration. This man and his associates were as worthless as their predecessors. They sought to confirm their influence over Ivan by the encouragement of his excesses; and even seduced him into the commission of the most extravagant atrocities. They constantly impressed upon his mind, that the only way to make his authority respected was by the exercise of severity, and that power consisted in oppression. He was an apt pupil in such pernicious lessons; and the ferocity he exhibited elicited the applause of his barbarous advisers. These abandoned men actually pandered to the love of cruelty of their young master, by murdering, in his presence, any unfortunate person who was so unhappy as to offend him.

Things went on thus for three or four years, when, in his seventeenth year, Ivan was crowned Czar of Russia. His minority had been disfigured by such acts of bloodshed as converted the latter part of it into a reign of terror. His conduct produced that reaction which frequently, though we regret not always, attends upon tyranny. The citizens of Moscow, maddened by the bloodthirsty caprices of their sovereign, resorted to one of those material protests against his conduct, with which the oppressed commonly warn their despots. One night they set the city on fire in several places; and with the early dawn the young tyrant was aroused from his slumbers by the roaring of flames, the hurried trampling of excited crowds, and the curses of the multitude. The sudden terrors to which he had been subjected in his infancy had made him the slave of fear. A sensation of horror seized him, which was much increased when he learned that the infamous Prince Gluisky had been torn in pieces by the furious mob. Struck to the heart, the young tyrant feared that he himself might fall a victim to the just anger of his incensed people. In this state of mental disorder,



and while the fierce outcries of the excited crowds who thronged the streets, and the stifling smell of fire penetrated to his chamber, he was approached by a wandering monk, named Sylvester, whose piety, boldness, and rude eloquence had obtained for him, among the people, the reputation of being a prophet. Carrying the Bible in one hand, and extending the other in an attitude of warning, while his eyes flashed with that excitement which hovers on the verge of insanity, the monk arrested the attention of the czar; as he predicted, from certain appearances of the stars, his speedy ruin, if his courses of cruelty and tyranny were not abandoned. He succeeded in making a deep impression on the scared mind of the czar; whose crimes, he assured him, had aroused the vengeance of heaven. The efforts of the monk were seconded by the entreaties and exhortations of the virtuous Alexis Adascheff, and by the persuasions of the young and beautiful Anastatia, to whom Ivan had been but recently united. A change was thus effected in the mind of the juvenile despot; and for a time he became human in his conduct.

Ivan appeared to delight in astonishing his counsellors and his people; and the seeming change in his nature created as much surprise as his recent atrocities. Under the influence of his new advisers, he sanctioned an entire change in the system of government. His evil companions were dismissed from all posts of authority, and their places supplied by able and upright men. Everything was reduced to order, and tranquillity re-established throughout the country. The army was reorganised, the pay of the soldiery increased; the proprietors of estates compelled to contribute, according to their means, to the military strength of the empire, which rose to a height it had never reached before. Amongst the new military arrangements was the institution of the afterwards turbulent and infamous Strelitz, a permanent militia of fusileers, who were eventually regarded as the Janizaries of Russia. Such was the extent and population of the empire, that its available military power was estimated at 300,000 men! The possession of so much power roused the military ardour of the czar, and stimulated him to action. In the year 1552, he marched, at the head of a powerful army, against the turbulent Tartars of Kasan, who never remained in tranquillity except when the

sword was suspended over their heads. Ivan commenced his campaign in the depth of winter, to the disgust of his soldiers; whose complaints, however, he soon extinguished by the severity of his punishments. He took Kasan in consequence of his engineers springing a mine before it; a mode of warfare with which both his troops and that of the enemy were unacquainted, and which accordingly gained him much reputation. Having entered the city in triumph, he caused the Tartar mosques to be converted into Christian churches; and compelled the khan to submit to the rite of baptism. Notwithstanding the questionable source from which these acts of religious ardour proceeded, they won for the czar some popularity among the people, who were not given to the analysis of motives. One wise measure of Ivan's was the erection of fortresses to keep the Tartars in check. He was further successful in reducing the kingdom of Astracan, then much esteemed for its vines and other valuable productions, and annexing it to the Russian empire. Indeed, during this period of grace, everything seemed to prosper with him, and he basked in the sunshine of fortune. The sultan, Selim II., apparently surprised at the approach of the Russians to the shores of the Caspian, sent an army of 80,000 Turks against Astracan. The Turks were then almost in the zenith of that dazzling power which astonished and awed all Europe. Their troops were flushed with repeated victories, and their statesmen and generals accustomed to regard with disdain the most distinguished of European soldiers. Had they encountered the Russians, just shaking off the enervating effects of two centuries and a-half of bondage to the Tartars, there can be but little doubt they would have been the victors. But the prolonged contests between these antagonistic races were not yet to commence; they were unborn events, slowly germinating in the mystic body of the future. Turkey was to be weaker, and Russia stronger, before these great powers crossed each other's path. The formidable army which Selim II. sent against Astracan, perished miserably in the desolate steppes by which it is surrounded.

Some writers attribute to this period the accidental discovery of Siberia, and its annexation to Russia. Much uncertainty, however, reigns over the actual date of this circumstance; and if Siberia was discovered



at this time, it was disregarded—a probable circumstance, as the czar had already more territory than he could govern efficiently, or his subjects use advantageously. Russia was already too extended; her power would have been greater had her subjects been confined within a smaller arena. The discovery of Siberia is attributed to a wandering Cossack chief of the Don, called Yermák Timoféyew; but though some accounts represent him as penetrating into these desolate regions during the early part of the reign of Ivan, others state that that event took place in 1581, only three years before Ivan's death. The entire subjugation of Siberia, which was accomplished by private adventurers, and without expense to the government, occupied a period of about eighty years. Those warlike people, the Don Cossacks, to whom we have just alluded, gave in their voluntary adhesion to the Russian government in the year 1549.

During this early period of his reign, when the ferocious nature of Ivan appeared to be softened and subdued by the amiability of his beautiful consort Anastatia, the young czar seems earnestly to have desired to promote the prosperity of the empire. In 1547 he dispatched an embassy to the eccentric Charles V., emperor of Germany, to obtain his permission for the engagement of artisans and engineers for the instruction of the Russians. The request was refused; but as we are told that a number of German artists were shortly afterwards imported into Russia, it must be assumed that the decision of the emperor was evaded. Certain it is that Ivan has the honour of having introduced the art of printing into the empire. Russia was at this time beginning, in some measure, to hold out her hands in amity to distant countries. During the reign of our boy-king, Edward VI., whose unripe buds of promise were so prematurely withered, Russia opened a trade with England through the inhospitable port of Archangel. Some English navigators having, while attempting to find a north-east passage to China and India, penetrated into the White Sea, and been compelled to put in at Archangel, were so kindly received by the Russian people, and by the czar himself, into whose presence they were graciously admitted, that they brought home a report which led to the immediate formation of a company of merchant traders with that nation.

This period of tranquillity for Russia was

about to terminate. The virtuous czarina died in the year 1560, after having successfully restrained the furious passions of her husband during a period of thirteen years. With her died the moderation and calmness of the czar; and the ferocity which she had charmed into inaction, burst forth with an increased force and an appalling rapidity. Some years before, Ivan had consulted an old bishop, who had been banished from court on account of his crimes. In reply, the worldly prelate observed—"If you would become truly an absolute monarch, never seek a counsellor wiser than yourself; never receive advice from any man. "Command, and never obey; then you will be a real sovereign, and a terror to the boyards. Bear in mind, that the counsellor of the wisest prince always ends by being his ruler." The czar at once recognised the subtle policy expressed in these words, and kissing the hand of the prelate, exclaimed—"My own father could not have given me more wholesome advice." These precepts, though they probably slept in the mind of the czar, never altogether faded from it. During the life of Anastatia he had patiently received the advice of Adascheff and Sylvester, who acted with virtue and wisdom; but their ascendancy was doomed, and the czar resolved henceforth only to take council of his own mind and passions.

From this period to the fortunate hour which saw the death of Ivan, he rioted in every excess of cruelty which a morbid imagination could suggest, or a monster put into execution. His life was but one prolonged gigantic crime. Lord Bacon truly observed—"Nature is often hidden; sometimes overcome; seldom extinguished." The atrocities of Nero or Caligula were exceeded by this northern tyrant; while those of our eighth Henry seem actually mild in comparison. It has been well observed, that "if the narrative of his crimes could be spared from the page of history, it would rescue us from a series of details, the very relation of which must sicken the least susceptible mind. But there was a passion so unearthly in this paragon of monsters—he was so elevated in atrocity, and reached so sublime a height in the perpetration of cruelties—that his life, incredible and disgusting as it is, fills too great a space in the annals of despotism to be passed over lightly."

Shortly after the death of Anastatia, Ivan banished his prudent advisers, and then en-



couraged the vilest calumnies against them. Some worthless court parasites charged them with having brought about the death of the czarina by violent means—a transparent falsehood which Ivan pretended to believe. Nothing could save them from his fury, and they soon fell victims to his thirst for blood. Even those who had been associated with them were either put to the torture or to death; or, when a milder temper influenced the despot for the hour, imprisoned or banished. While these indiscriminate severities were going on, the court was the scene of the wildest excesses. A boyard, who presumed to remonstrate with one of the new favourites, was murdered on the spot by the hand of Ivan himself; while another, who refused to join in the lascivious pleasures of his sovereign, was stabbed to the heart while on his knees in church at prayer.

The prince Andrew Kurbsky, who had rendered important services to the country, learnt that he was one of the intended victims of the czar. Knowing that integrity would avail him nothing against false accusations, or the furious whims of his sovereign, he fled to Poland for safety, and placed himself under the protection of Sigismund II., the king of that country, and most inveterate enemy of Russia. From this asylum he wrote an accusatory letter to the czar, in which he charged him with being the cause of all the miseries which their common country then endured; with having shed the blood of Israel's elders in the temples of the Lord; and threatened him with eternal vengeance for his crimes. When this epistle was presented to Ivan, he, on learning from whence it came, struck the messenger across the legs with an iron-bound staff which he usually carried; and then, while the blood flowed rapidly from the man's wounds, composedly perused the document. The czar was not destitute of abilities: neglected as his education had been, he could write with freedom, and was proud of his literary attainments. He himself replied to Kurbsky, in a vein of mingled anger and sarcasm. The letter is still preserved. In it the czar thus addresses the fugitive prince—"Why, thou wretch, dost thou destroy thy traitor soul in saving by flight thy worthless body? If thou art really honest and virtuous, why not die by the hand of thy master, and thereby obtain the crown of the martyrs? What is life? What are earthly pomps and riches? Vanity! a shadow!—What thou assestest of my as-

sumed cruelties is an impudent lie. I do *not* destroy the elders of Israel, nor do I stain with their blood the Lord's temples: the peaceful and religious live happily in my service. Against traitors alone I am severe; but who ever spared them? Did not Constantine the Great sacrifice his only son?—Thou tellest me that I shall never again see thy Ethiop face. Heavens! what a misfortune!" Finally, the letter says—"But I am silent, for Solomon forbids us to waste words with fools like thee."

Scornfully as the czar treated the accusations and enmity of Prince Kurbsky, the result of the flight of the latter soon made itself apparent. Sigismund gathered an army for the invasion of Russia, and instigated the Tartars to make a descent upon its southern provinces. On finding the fugitive not so helpless as he expected, Ivan was seized with fits of passion and paroxysms of cruelty. He regarded every one with distrust, and treated all around him as if they were the accomplices of Kurbsky. Many he put to the rack, or to death, merely from motives of suspicion. He constantly charged the boyards with entertaining evil designs against him and the state, and then confiscated their property. Racked by an unsatisfied vengeance, he frequently lamented that he could not find victims enough to allay his wrath. Haunted by a real impression that a conspiracy against him was in progress, or influenced by a cunning desire to extend his power over his people, he next performed a trick of so whimsical a nature, that it gives some slight colouring to the charitable suggestion that he was insane. Early one winter morning, in the year 1568, he left the Kremlin in his travelling sledge, and, together with his family, his attendants, and a regiment of cavalry, abandoned Moscow. Prior to his departure, he ordered the metropolitan to celebrate mass in the church of the Assumption, where, having prayed with great apparent devotion, he solemnly left the city. Why he had departed, or where he was going to, was kept a profound secret.

It might be supposed that the inhabitants of Moscow were glad to be rid of his presence, even though but for a short time. The reverse was the case; they were seized with astonishment and despondency at his inexplicable absence. Cruel as he was, he had acquired something of popularity amongst the people. His severities had been exercised rather against the nobles



and the clergy than against them; and as they had frequently been the victims of the tyranny of their masters, they often secretly rejoiced at the calamities which fell upon the latter. They had also gradually come—in consequence of the pretensions of the czar, and the servile if not blasphemous teachings of the priesthood—to regard their sovereign as the representative of God; as indeed standing between them and Deity; and even, in some inexplicable way, performing some of the beneficent functions of the Supreme! Strange as it may seem, these unreasoning barbarians had ever looked to the czar for that protection which cultivated and devout minds expect only from the Almighty Power which creates and sustains all things. So far was this perverted feeling carried, that the people began to believe, that in being deserted by Ivan, they were deserted by Omnipotence.

It was a month before the inhabitants of Moscow learned what had become of their sovereign. It is probable that, by that time, he had no intention either to abandon his authority or to prolong his absence. Two letters arrived from him—one addressed to the metropolitan, and the other to the people. From these letters it appeared that he had taken up his abode at Alexandrovsky, a distant fortress, surrounded by a gloomy forest. The letter to the metropolitan denounced the clergy and the boyards, but especially the former, as the cause of all the disorders which had afflicted the country during his minority; and he asserted that they were even then promoting similar sources of evil. So great, he added, was the evil influence of the primate and the priesthood, that he had abandoned the management of the affairs of state, and left Moscow to wander a fugitive upon the earth. Ivan's epistle to the people was in a different style, and showed the art with which the despot influenced their childish minds. He concluded a strain of mingled flattery and melancholy by an assurance that he had no cause of complaint against them, and by bidding them farewell for ever.

On hearing these letters, the spiritless people broke out into senseless lamentations. Closing their shops, they assembled in groups in the streets. Everywhere business was suspended; and the burden of every conversation was, "The czar has forsaken us, and we are lost. Who will now defend us against the enemy? What are

sheep without the shepherd?" So great was their blind attachment to the regal power, and the legitimate possessor of it, that they proceeded in crowds to the metropolitan, and urged him to solicit Ivan to return to his faithful people. "Let him," they exclaimed, "punish all those who deserve it; has he not the power of life and death? The state cannot remain without a head, and we will not acknowledge any other than the one God has given us." They added, "Who, without him, could preserve the purity of religion? who could save millions of souls from eternal perdition?" The opinion of the people was too general, and too vehemently expressed, to be disregarded. After much consultation, it was decided that a body of prelates and boyards should proceed to the retreat of the czar, and, humbling themselves before him, implore him to return to Moscow.

Ivan beheld the abasement of the deputation with a secret emotion of pleasure, and affected to accede to their prayers with reluctance. Before doing so, he extorted from the clergy a condition, that they would never interfere to avert those punishments which he considered it necessary to inflict on such of his subjects who entered into conspiracies either against the state or him and his family. On his return to Moscow, the czar was received with enthusiastic acclamations; but the slavish population were welcoming a scourge which was to fall like a curse upon their abject servility. The appearance of Ivan, on his entrance into the city, struck the beholders with surprise and pity. The Russian chroniclers observe—"Only a month had elapsed since his absence, yet they hardly knew him again. His large and robust body, his ample chest, his broad shoulders, had shrunk; his head, which had been shaded by thick locks, was become bald; the thin and scattered remains of a beard, which was lately the ornament of his face, now disfigured it. His eyes were dull, and his features, marked with a ravenous ferocity, were deformed." This appearance—whether the result of a debilitated state of body, proceeding from mental anguish; or, which is far more probable, intentionally brought about for the sake of producing an effect—elicited a strong feeling of sympathy from the people.

Addressing the assembled multitude, he dwelt upon the crimes of the boyards, and insisted on the necessity there existed for



his possession of the absolute power to punish where he thought fit to do so. He concluded with an exhortation, couched in the language of piety, on the vanity of the world, and the worthlessness of life; the object of which was to reconcile the people to the wholesale sacrifice of it, which he contemplated. He then desired and obtained from the populace permission to institute a new body-guard, to be composed of a thousand men of noble birth, who were to bear the title of the *Opritsnina*, or Select Legion. This body of men, when actually formed, instead of being composed of the nobly born, was a collection of persons of the lowest class and most degraded character, whose real business soon consisted of acting as spies, informers, and assassins. They were commissioned to find out and denounce disaffected persons, of whom they afterwards became the executioners. As the property of the victims fell to these ruffians, it may be supposed that they were diligent in their infamous vocation; and that, where a crime could not always be discovered, one was sometimes invented.

The next act of the despot was to erect for himself a new palace, or rather fortress, outside the walls of the Kremlin; for a fear of assassination seems to have made a deep impression upon his mind. To obtain a site for this building, he desolated the streets, and instructed his ruffian guard to drive to a distance those who had been thus shamefully despoiled of their property. No less than 12,000 of the citizens are said to have been dispossessed of their habitations, for the sake of erecting his regal prison. Though the new palace was regarded as impregnable, yet the terrors of the czar did not permit him to reside in it in tranquillity. Haunted by a constant sense of that retribution which he knew he had provoked, he left this building, and retired again to the gloomy fortress of Alexandrovsky, around which a considerable town was in course of erection. This no one was permitted to enter or leave without his express permission, and a guard was stationed to enforce the regulation. In this seclusion an extraordinary whim entered into the mind of the despot. With a theatrical burlesque of the formularies of religion, he assumed the habit and title of an abbot, and bestowed upon his depraved body-guard the vestments and name of monks. They wore black robes over their military dress, and were compelled

to adopt a mode of life resembling that practised in the cloisters. This did not consist of any light duties, but was remarkably rigid. A religious service commenced at the early hour of three in the morning, and was prolonged until seven. An hour later mass was performed; and at ten the military brotherhood, with the exception of the czar, sat down to a bountiful repast. During this the eccentric Ivan stood and read aloud from some book on a religious topic. Ever influenced by a desire to conciliate even the lowest of the people, he caused the remnants of the meal to be distributed to the neighbouring poor. After dinner the tyrant descended to the dungeons of the fortress, to superintend the infliction of the torture upon some of his victims; and at night, after the reading of prayers, he retired to rest, and was lulled to sleep by three blind men. Such was his disregard of the spirit of the Christian religion, while intent upon the letter, that his most sanguinary orders were frequently given during prayers.

Always terrified by the dread of insurrection or assassination, the tyrant increased his recent body-guard from one to six thousand men. Those who were added to it consisted of the most infamous and blood-thirsty wretches that could be procured. They paraded the streets, armed with daggers and hatchets; and the victims of their suspicion or ferocious wantonness are said to have averaged a score daily. As types of their office, these wretches bore a dog's-head and a broom suspended from their saddle-bow; the former, to signify that they worried the enemies of the czar; the latter, to indicate that they swept them from off the face of the earth.

No rank preserved its possessors against the fury of the tyrant. Prince Schuisky and his son, relatives of the worthless man who fell a victim to the first-awakened wrath of the czar while in his boyhood, were seized and beheaded. The same day four other princes shared the same fate, and a fifth was impaled. Subsequently a great number of victims perished by the axe, impalement, or poisoning, while their wives and children expired under the scourge, or were driven naked into the forests, where they perished from cold and hunger. The passion of the tyrant for blood increased with its gratification, and the horrors of each new day exceeded that of its predecessor. The mangled bodies of the dead lay in the public streets and squares; and such a terror fell upon the



survivors, that few dared to give the rites of burial to these terrible evidences of a diabolical tyranny.

Executions, even though numbers were put to death together, soon failed to supply the bloodthirsty excitement which this awful man longed for. The axe, the scourge, and the instrument of impalement, were too slow to meet his fearful wishes. His constant demand was for blood!—more blood! and his chief pleasure appeared to consist in dwelling, with a horrible malignity, upon the agonies of his fellow-men. He soon sought for excuses to give up whole towns to the operations of his army of ruffians and executioners. One day, a few of the inhabitants of Torjek had the misfortune to quarrel with some of his legionaries. The czar seized upon the incident with avidity, declared all the inhabitants to be rebels, and caused them to be tortured to death, or drowned in crowds. The inhabitants of another town were exposed to a similarly dreadful fate, because they were the dependents of a nobleman to whom he had contracted a dislike. Infancy, womanhood, and old age were no protection from the hellish wrath of the czar. He delighted in compelling ladies of rank to stand in indelicate positions in the public streets, while others, after being exposed in a state of nakedness, were shot in the presence of the horrified spectators.

Frightful as were these atrocities, they were exceeded by the subsequent deeds of the tyrant. His proceedings at Novgorod are perfectly frightful to relate. A criminal of that city, wishing to take revenge upon the authorities who had punished him, informed the czar that the archbishop and inhabitants of the city designed to break their allegiance to Ivan, and to place Novgorod under the protection of the King of Poland. The villain further informed the czar that a letter to the Polish monarch, of a nature to prove the guilt of the accused, would be found concealed behind an image of the Virgin, in the church of St. Sophia. This was true; as the scoundrel had written such a letter, and placed it there himself, where it was subsequently found by Ivan's messengers. A proper investigation would have exposed the treachery of the fellow, who pretended to discover a plot which had no real existence; and, indeed, the accusation bore an air of improbability upon the face of it. But the czar cared little for its truth. He longed for an opportunity to

indulge, on a gigantic scale, his morbid appetite for slaughter, and this circumstance afforded one. His march of devastation to Novgorod, and his awful massacres there, are regarded as the most appalling acts of his career of blood.

Accompanied by his son, and followed by his legion of monsters, Ivan left the dismal fortress of Alexandrovsky in the December of 1569, and marched towards Novgorod. At the town of Klin, where he paused for a while, his army of executioners exterminated the whole of the population. On arriving at the ancient city of Twer, he sent his soldiers into the streets with permission to murder and plunder as they pleased. The wretches availed themselves of this diabolical license to such a dreadful extent, that the horrors enacted were compared by the miserable people to the terrible cruelties inflicted upon their ancestors by the Tartar, Usbek-Khan. The czar himself assisted in the work of slaughter; and his confidential minister, Skaratof, entering the cell where the deposed metropolitan was confined, strangled him with his own hands.

The czar continued his march, and depopulated all the towns and villages that lay in his way to Novgorod, which miserable city was entered by his advanced guard on the 2nd of January, 1570. In conformity with the commands of Ivan, the dog's-head legion closed all the convents, and demanded from each of the monks the sum of twenty roubles. The unfortunate creatures who could not comply with this extortion, were mercilessly scourged, from daybreak until evening. Guards were placed at the entrances of the city, to prevent any one from escaping, and the principal inhabitants were placed in fetters, to await their doom.

Four days elapsed in this state of uncertainty and terror, and then all the wretched monks who could not pay the sum demanded of them were beaten to death with clubs, and the disfigured corpses returned to their respective monasteries for burial. On the fifth day, Ivan solemnly entered the city, at the head of a large body of troops. The terrified archbishop and the clergy, carrying all the worthless images and relics, in which they placed so much faith, met him in a body, and the primate endeavoured to pronounce the customary benediction. The despot interrupted him with a fierce address, in which expressions of affected piety were mingled with furious



execrations against the primate and his order. Then entering the church of St. Sophia, Ivan commanded mass to be performed, during which he prayed with great apparent fervour. This ceremony over, he entered the episcopal palace, and sat down to dinner, surrounded by his boyards. Perhaps the agitated primate thought afterwards, by pathetic and pious appeals to the czar, to allay that furious and maniacal excitement which seemed rapidly transforming him into a demon. If so, the unhappy prelate was painfully deceived. During the meal, the tyrant started up, and, with eyes flashing with an excitement that trembled upon the brink of insanity, uttered a wild and piercing cry. It was a preconcerted signal; and, in a moment, the chamber was filled with his military executioners, who seized the archbishop, priests, and servants. No crime was urged against them; not even a faint mockery of the forms of justice were observed; and the doomed archbishop was cast into confinement, until the crowned demon had leisure to gloat over his dying agonies. The episcopal palace, and the neighbouring cathedral, were then abandoned to plunder; and everything valuable and regarded as sacred—rich vestments, plate, images—were carried away by ruffians. The churches and monasteries of the city were also given up to spoliation, and soon cleared of everything valuable, by the impious hands of these abandoned depredators.

A darker tragedy followed; for plunder was but the ominous prologue to the work of blood. By the commands of Ivan, an unsparing and even systematic massacre of the inhabitants of the city took place. The wretch sat in judgment with his son by his side, who, it would seem, was averse to the atrocities which he was powerless to check. Every day, from five hundred to a thousand of the miserable inhabitants of the city were hurried from the presence of the tyrant, and put to death by torture or fire. A reign of terror prevailed; and almost every mode of butchery and torture were resorted to. A number of the inhabitants were huddled together in a large enclosure, where the czar put many of them to death himself. When, however, his fury had exhausted him, he gave up the remainder to be murdered by his guard, or torn to pieces by his dogs. Immense numbers of the people (including women with their infants) were thrown into the river Volkhof, and drowned. Those who strove in their mor-

tal agony to escape by swimming, were dispatched by soldiers, who sailed about on the water, armed with long spears for that purpose. For more than a month, hundreds of unhappy creatures perished daily in the freezing waters of the Volkhof; and then the work of murder was checked by the scarcity of victims. But the fury of Ivan was not yet satiated; and he and his troops of monsters desolated the surrounding country and monasteries, where, in addition to the work of indiscriminate murder and plunder, they wantonly gave houses to the flames, destroyed the cattle, and devastated the springing corn.

Returning to Novgorod, he feasted his eyes on the terrible spectacle the smitten city presented. All the valuable goods that remained, such as silks and furs, he caused to be divided among his soldiers; while such as they could not carry away with them, were either burnt or thrown into the river. Wearied at length with bloodshed and rapine, the czar prepared to depart. Before he did so, he issued a general pardon to the surviving population, and summoned them to appear before him. A mournful assembly of spirit-broken and despairing wretches obeyed the command, and stood—the mere shadows of men and women—in the presence of the slayer of their fellow-countrymen. It was a painful sight to see these wretched creatures, whose passive dullness bordered upon idiocy, and whose lank forms were emaciated by famine and the incessant apprehensions of death and of tortures, to which a speedy death would have been mercy. Such a mournful spectacle might have touched the hardest heart; and perhaps it did make a momentary impression on the Satanic incarnation who had gathered them together. Whether in a transient spirit of compassion, or from a diabolical irony, he spoke to them in the mildest language, and bidding them farewell, desired them to pray to God that his reign might be a long and happy one. The monster then abandoned the city he had converted into a slaughter-house, a grave-yard, and a place of wailing. It was, indeed, almost depopulated; for 60,000 of the inhabitants had fallen victims to his capricious fury. To complete the misery of the survivors, the rotting remains of the unburied dead produced a pestilence, which, in consequence of the destruction of the crops and cattle, was followed by famine.

The czar having visited the city of Pskof,



where he contented himself with terrifying and plundering the inhabitants, directed his steps towards Moscow. He carried in his train the Archbishop of Novgorod, and other distinguished prisoners whom he had resolved to put to death with a solemn parade of horror. To increase the number of the victims to be offered up at this bloody carnival, he caused many of the boyards of Moscow to be arrested; even including among them a number of his personal favourites, or those who were deemed so. Some suspicion of treason was assigned as the cause of these arrests; but it was known to be a mere pretence. A day was appointed for the execution of the whole number; and when the light dawned upon it, spectators were horrified at the sight of eighteen gibbets, erected in the market-place, while, in the centre of them, a huge copper cauldron was suspended over a blazing fire. In addition to these frightful preparations, instruments of torture lay about in every direction. When the news spread, a panic seized the people, and they fled from the city, or hid themselves in terror. In a few hours Moscow was deserted, and no one was to be seen but a troop of the select legion arranged around the gibbets and the cauldron. At length the oppressive silence was broken by the roll of drums. It heralded the approach of the czar, who came on horseback, attended by his son, and followed by a regiment of his torturers. After them, the executioners brought along a troop of about 300 wretched-looking men, pale and haggard, and many of them stained with blood from recent injuries, and scarcely able to walk. These were the destined victims.

The tyrant was disappointed on finding that there was not any audience to witness the awful pageantry he had provided. He therefore commanded his soldiers to compel the attendance of the people. Finding that the latter assembled very slowly, he went on the same errand himself; and, assuring them of his good-will, desired their presence at the spectacle he had provided for them. The terrified citizens dared not disobey, and soon the market-place was filled with spectators, even to the roofs of the houses. The czar then addressed them upon what he termed the righteous justice of the punishments, and elicited from them insincere expressions of approval. They knew that to have crossed his will would have been to court instant destruction. This prelimi-

nary over, 120 pallid creatures were selected from the group of destined victims, and pardoned, on account, said the despot, of their being less guilty than the others. The rest were given into the hands of the executioners, who put them to death in the most revolting manner. Some were cut to pieces, or plunged half alive into the boiling cauldron. We cannot dwell longer on these disgusting atrocities: it must be sufficient to say that the executions lasted about four hours, and that nearly 200 innocent persons were put to deaths of the most repulsive and protracted kind. The monster endeavoured to reconcile his subjects to his mad career of blood, by asserting that his authority over them was divine. "I am," he said, "your god, as God is mine; whose throne is surrounded by archangels, as is the throne of God."

It may be supposed that, under this time of progressive horror, the Russian people lost all public spirit, and were no longer formidable to surrounding enemies. The distracted country soon became a prey to those foes who were ever ready to take advantage of its weakness. Sweden made itself master of Esthonia; the Livonian knights seized upon Courland and Semigallia. Towards the close of Ivan's reign, Stephen Bathori, who, though of a noble family, had been raised by his merits and military reputation to the rank of King of Poland, defeated the czar in many engagements, and deprived him of Livonia, which, on account of its being washed by the waters of the Baltic, was justly regarded as a highly important part of his dominions. It, as well as Courland, was an outlet for the commerce of Russia, and a point from which communication with the more civilised nations of Europe could be opened. The Polish king, who was a wise, brave, and just man,\* viewed the conduct of Ivan with disgust; and acted with such decision, as to throw the tyrant into the greatest trepidation. Bathori charged him with the commission of the grossest of crimes, with falsifying treaties, with revolting inhumanity to his people, and, finally, challenged him to single combat.

Ivan not only shrunk from the proffered duel, but carefully kept back from all

\* An instance of his just and tolerant nature is contained in the following fact. On being urged to adopt severe measures for the suppression of certain religious nonconformists, he replied, "I reign over persons; but it is God who rules the conscience."



danger in the contests between his troops and the Poles. This man, so reckless of human life, was himself the slave of the most abject fears. He dreaded assassination, as well he might; and it is strange that he did not fall a victim to the fury and despair of some bereaved father or maddened son, who had been deprived of those dearest to them by his wanton cruelties. He feared death even in the course of nature; as well he might, if he believed in the doctrines of that religion of the forms of which he made so ostentatious a parade, and ever had visions of judgment and the wrath of an avenging God. It has even been stated, that the very cruelties of this Russian monster were chiefly the result of the terrors which haunted him like evil spirits by day and by night, and made him dread an assassin in every one who approached him.

Awed by the courage of the Polish monarch, Ivan, for a time, held back from repelling his aggressive actions. Impelled at length by the urgency of the position, and the entreaties of his boyards, he was induced to take the field. But he took no share in the conflicts that followed, and in which his troops were generally defeated. Such was his aversion to the war, that he actually bought the intercession of the pope's envoy by lying promises that, in the event of his proving successful in disarming the animosity of Bathori, he would endeavour to convert the Russian people to catholicism. When any of the Poles or Livonians were taken prisoners by Ivan's soldiers, the wretch caused the captives to be put to death in some shocking manner. Some he had spitted on lances; while others were thrown into boiling cauldrons, or slowly consumed at fires, which the monster often amused himself by stirring up while the execution was in progress. These atrocities Bathori had resolved to avenge; and he was occupied in preparing for a vigorous campaign, when he died suddenly, and thus relieved the czar from the fear of a well-merited retribution.

Among his other tyrannies, Ivan oppressed his people with the most exorbitant taxes. Next to cruelty, a selfish desire for accumulation seemed his master-passion. Not content with the imposition of taxes, which were enormous for those times, he established the most offensive monopolies, and even robbed his people by the frequent confiscation of their property on any pretext, or on none. It was his will,

and resistance was unavailing: to have offered it, would have been a suicidal exposure to his fury. Accustomed in all things to obey his appetites, he disregarded the customs of Russia and the precepts of the Greek church, and married seven wives. Notwithstanding, he even sought the hand of Queen Elizabeth of England, who politely declined it. Thinking that a refuge from the fury of his subjects would be necessary, in the event of their awakening from the state of apathetic terror into which he had plunged them, he solicited and obtained from Elizabeth a promise that she would grant him an asylum in England, "should his ungrateful subjects render it necessary for him to retire from Russia." Disappointed in obtaining the hand of Elizabeth, he desired to add an eighth lady to his matrimonial circle, and that she should be from the English court. Elizabeth, who was devoid of womanly delicacy in such matters, had no objection; and the daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon was, at her own desire, and with the permission of the queen, offered to the inspection of the Russian ambassador. Statements of Ivan's atrocities, however, reached the ears of the lady before the match was concluded, and she begged Elizabeth to spare her the perilous honour.

The czar's appetite for cruelty increased as he advanced in life. All ordinary modes of slaughter, and even wholesale massacres, at length failed to arouse that sanguinary excitement from which he derived delight. He broke at length into an eccentricity of murder, in which he compelled his victims to trample upon the most sacred bonds which unite society. He required his subjects to become fratricides and parricides. One man he compelled to become the executioner of his own father; another, of his brother! Then he caused no less than 800 unhappy women to be drowned, and put their relatives to the torture until they pointed out the places in which their wealth was hidden. Amongst the lesser atrocities of this abandoned wretch, was the keeping a number of bears, who, when hungry and irritated, he would let loose in the public streets; especially when he happened to see from his windows a group of citizens collected in them. The struggles and cries of those who were injured by the brutes elicited from him uncontrollable shouts of laughter.

This frightful man had other moments of



grim mirth when he required a number of jesters, whom he retained to amuse him. This was commonly both before and after executions, at which times he was more than usually disposed for hilarity. Sometimes these professional fools were beaten or severely injured by their capricious master, if their jests did not happen to please him. The most distinguished of these jesters, who bore the name of Goosdef, met with a sterner fate. Failing one day to amuse the tyrant, the latter poured a basin of scalding soup on his head. The unhappy jester attempted to retreat, when Ivan struck him in a vital part with a knife, and he dropped senseless. A feeling of momentary regret followed the act, and a surgeon was immediately summoned. "Preserve my faithful servant," exclaimed the czar, "I have jested a little too hard with him!" "So hard," was the sycophantic and blasphemous reply, "that only God and your majesty can restore him to life; he breathes no more." Ivan threw a glance of contempt on the corpse of the murdered jester, bestowed upon it the name of dog, and returned to his pastimes. Even the merriment of this terrible man was frightful; and those to whom he seemed most attached were not safe from his whimsical cruelties. On another occasion a boyard, who is described as one of his favourites, visited the czar. No sooner had he made the reverential bow which the etiquette of the court exacted, than the czar exclaimed, "God save thee, my dear Boris, thou deservest a proof of my favour." As he spoke, he seized a knife and cut off one of the boyard's ears. The miserable sycophant uttered no cry or word of complaint; but concealing the pain he endured, thanked his persecutor for his gracious favour, and wished him a happy reign. There was something of policy, as well as brutal instinct, in this conduct of the czar. He lost no opportunity of impressing upon the Russians that, as their ruler, he was something more than human—something even akin to Deity; that, indeed, to repeat the impiously arrogant expression of his we have already quoted, "he was their God, as God was his." Such a point once admitted, it necessarily followed that even injuries or death, at his hands, were to be received with submission, and, if possible, with gratitude. Repulsive as this may seem, it was merely carrying to the extreme that effete doctrine of divine right and passive obedience which the

Stuarts afterwards struggled so long to establish in England. There was a wide difference between the dispositions of Charles I. and Ivan the Terrible; so wide a one, that some will be surprised at my establishing a comparison on any point between them; but the principles which actuated them were the same.

The blood-red catalogue of Ivan's crimes was nearly complete, and the close of his awful life was approaching. One dark deed yet remained to be performed, and then the sadly imperfect work of retribution commenced. His eldest and favourite son, accompanied by several of the boyards, one day entered his presence, and desired to be entrusted with the command of a body of troops, that he might proceed to the assistance of the city of Pskof, which was then being besieged by the Poles. The suspicious czar, always apprehensive of conspiracy and assassination, believed that even his own son was implicated in some insurrection against his government, and that the troops were perhaps wanted for the purpose of deposing him. A wild gust of rage broke over him; and, with a furious voice, he replied, "Rebel! you are leagued with the boyards in a conspiracy to dethrone me." As the words left his mouth he struck the prince several severe blows with the iron-bound staff he carried. Each inflicted a severe wound, and the last felled the unfortunate man to the earth, where he lay in a pool of blood. This frightful result was unintentional—the consequence of giving way to that madness of passion which years of unchecked cruelty had made a tyrant over the tyrant. Nothing was further from Ivan's intention than to slay the only one of his three sons who was capable of succeeding him on the throne. Indeed, it will shortly be seen that, in effect, those mad, thoughtless blows, destroyed the regal race of Ruric, and extinguished his dynasty.

On seeing the tragic consequence to which his unbridled fury had led, Ivan was instantly seized with remorse. Struck with horror and despair, and trembling violently, he threw himself upon the body of his son, and, with mingled words of endearment to his victim, of self-reproach and passionate appeals to heaven for assistance, he endeavoured to stop the crimson tide with which the life of the prince was issuing. It was too late: he who had ever been deaf to the agony of others, was now himself to expe-



rience the torture of heedless supplication. Whatever might have been the character of the victim, had he succeeded to power, he had at least the merit of being a remarkably dutiful and even affectionate son. At this sad moment, his chief care was to soothe the agony of his father. Claspings the hand of the repentant wretch, he implored him, with tears of tenderness, to be patient, and not to distress himself for an unintentional deed. His next thought was to exonerate himself from the unjust suspicions which had by this time vanished from the mind of the czar. "I die," he exclaimed, "an obedient son and a faithful subject." For four days the wretched prince lingered, and the now more wretched father sat by the bedside of his murdered son. Then the latter breathed his last in a chamber of that gloomy fortress of Alexandrovsky, whose dungeon walls had often re-echoed with the groans and wailing cries of those whom the tyrant had tortured in reckless wantonness.

The calamity which Ivan had brought upon himself, he felt with a poignancy which could scarcely have been expected from his hardened and brutal nature. His heart, which had so long been inaccessible to the faintest emotion of pity, seemed riven in twain. His conscience, so long seared and closed, was awakened into a condition of morbid activity. His mind was filled with horrible imaginations, and his sleep disturbed by dreadful dreams. Sometimes he started from his bed during the solemn hours of night, and appalled his attendants by his cries of terror; nor would sleep again visit him until exhaustion followed the excitement. So greatly did he suffer from remorse, that he expressed an intention of leaving Moscow and spending the remainder of his life in some monastery. The accomplishment of this desire was prevented by his subjects, who entreated him not to desert them. These strange people, who thus wooed the scourge and the gibbet, must have been, as it has been acutely expressed, "fascinated by the very cruelties that appalled them."

The tyrant did not long survive his son: within a few months both were laid in the grave. The exhaustion resulting from constant nervous excitement, induced a declining state; and, in the spring of 1584, his illness assumed a form which indicated that the career of this curse of the peace of his country was near its close.

The approaching death of Ivan had been predicted by some astrologers, whom he

threatened to burn alive for their officiousness. Yet he felt the coming shadows of dissolution, and seemed, at times, disposed to die in peace with a world he had so fearfully outraged. He appointed wise counsellors to watch over the actions of his son, Feodor or Theodore, who, though twenty-seven years of age, was very feeble in intellect. He commanded that all prisoners not charged with capital offences should be liberated, and that the enormous taxes he had extorted from his subjects should be reduced. Yet this conscience-smitten man had his hours of repose from self-accusation and mental disquiet. There were times when the expiring czar forgot with what a frantic violence he had murdered his son and massacred his people. On one of these occasions he caused himself to be carried to the chamber where his treasures were accumulated, that he might feast his eyes upon the glittering store. To an English gentleman who accompanied him, he dwelt at some length on the qualities of diamonds and other precious stones, pointing out to him the marks by which their genuineness could be ascertained, and their value estimated. At other times his fancies were not so innocent. Only two days before his death he attempted to violate the person of his daughter-in-law, who rushed terrified from his chamber, and thus avoided the violence of the libidinous savage, who persevered in crime even to the verge of the grave.

The last few days of his life he suffered from fever and delirium, and, in this condition, fancied himself in the presence of his murdered son, whom he sometimes seemed to converse with in accents of tenderness, and whose name he at other periods shouted aloud in tones of terror. The astrologers had predicted that he would die on the 18th of May. Having taken a warm bath on the 17th, and feeling himself better in consequence, he gave orders, on the following morning, that they should be put to death. The supposed prophets begged delay, on the ground that the time spoken of by them had not yet expired. Ivan then resorted to the remedy which had benefited him the preceding day, and, entering the bath, remained in it three hours. He indulged in a sleep after his bath, and, upon awaking, called for his chess-board. It was brought, and the czar, sitting up in bed, busied himself in arranging the pieces. While thus occupied a sudden pang seized him, and he fell backward, and expired almost



instantly. The prophecy was accomplished:\* the world's worst monster was no more.

Thus, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, perished Ivan the Terrible, who, into a life of but moderate length, had compressed the atrocities of centuries of crime. A nominal monarch from infancy, he was crowned czar at the age of seventeen, and ruled for thirty-seven years after that period. To sum up the character of such a wretch is almost a superfluity: the darkness of his crimes is not irradiated by one sunbeam of goodness; and in speaking of him, it is difficult to prevent the sobriety of judgment from merging into the bitterness of invective. It might be supposed that he was a madman, but that he steadily pursued, throughout his whole reign, a prudent and crafty policy. His object was to exalt the czar at the expense of the princes and boyards; and he accomplished this so perfectly, that those who at the commencement of his reign aspired to divide the empire, had, at the close of it, sunk into the abject courtiers of a tyrant. Notwithstanding his career of murder and oppression, Russia, in some respects, prospered under his rule; for, while he smote his people, his policy bound more closely together the yet unamalgamated portions of the empire. We cannot explain the crimes of Ivan on the theory of madness. His brain was rather malformed than diseased. That fury led occasionally to a state of transient disease, and produced brief aberration, is probable, nay, almost certain; but we must seek for the source of his crimes not in madness, which is the result of a *diseased* brain, but in an originally darkly-evil nature proceeding from a *deformed* brain. These distinctions may not be heeded by the cursory reader, but they will be regarded with interest by the reflective one. A wicked mother, and a persecuted infancy,

will serve also, in some degree, to explain the awful nature of this man: the fountain of his being was evil, and the early progress of the stream contaminated by severity, neglect, and polluting influences.

During some part of his reign he was the promoter of civilisation, and appeared to take an interest in the prosperity and advancement of his people. Notwithstanding his neglected education, his natural abilities were good, and his understanding far above the average of those by whom he was surrounded. Nor was he destitute of accomplishments. We have referred to the fact that he was proud of his talent as a letter-writer; and his epistles show a considerable power of sarcasm and a freedom of language. His behaviour with respect to religion is difficult to be accounted for. A believer even down to the coarsest superstitions of his church, yet he frequently burlesqued its most venerable forms and its sacred principles, in a manner which, in most men, would have been regarded as profane, even to the height of blasphemy. We do not, however, think that his conduct ever appeared to him in that light. He had proclaimed, and heard others maintain, his semi-divinity so long, that he no doubt came in a large measure to believe it. He endeavoured to prove himself the *god* of Russia, by trampling upon those things which other men held sacred, and by disregarding those laws which common men must obey. When he condemned the innocent to deaths of torture, and when he surveyed their dying agonies undisturbed, he appears to have believed that he was imitating the Divine wrath and immovable calmness. Awfully arrogant as such an idea is, and painful as it must appear to the bulk of English readers in this age, yet it was pandered to by his priesthood—fostered by that very clergy against whom he after-

\* Concerning uninspired prophecies, Lord Bacon observes—"My judgment is, that they ought all to be despised, and ought to serve but for winter talk by the fireside. Though when I say despised, I mean it for belief; for otherwise, the spreading or publishing of them is in no sort to be despised; for they have done much mischief; and I see many severe laws made to suppress them." The prediction in the czar Ivan's case is remarkable; yet it is one of those which have an especial tendency to bring about their own fulfilment. The monarch whose life has been by one of his historians described as one long scene of fear, might have had the feeble flickering of life extinguished by the nervous excitement arising from such a prophecy. A living writer, of more merit than orthodoxy, insists on the ex-

istence of prophecy—or, we should rather say, of natural insight into the future—in these days, and instances many curious examples in support of his opinion. He explains it upon the principles of mesmerism—an unproved science, which we neither believe nor disbelieve, for the very sufficient reason that we have not addressed ourselves to a serious examination of it. Credulity is not our failing; yet are we ready to confess we think society, for the most part, is too ready dogmatically to condemn new-born and unestablished matters. When on such themes we hear totally uninformed persons say, with an air of authority, "I think this," and "I think that, &c.," we are almost disposed to say as Coleridge did once to a superficial fellow—"You think, sir! you only think you think."



wards so prominently directed his cruelties; and who, in his capricious fury, found the punishment of their parasitical parody of the sacred tenets of their Divine Master.

Nearly the whole of Ivan's life was a prolonged outrage against both God and man; the former, he believed, he propitiated by his reiterated prayers, while the latter he terrified by the recklessness of his cruelty. His nerves of steel, and his utter absence of feeling, awed his superstitious and brutal people into that abject obedience on which his power was based. His sceptre was a sword which ever ran with the blood of his subjects. His very ferocity was by them regarded as greatness; and the people of Moscow deplored his absence whenever he withdrew himself from their city. Truly, barbarous nations are the nurseries of tyrants; and Ivan was made worse by the base adulation of his courtiers,

and the dull, superstitious reverence of his people. We dismiss the consideration of this bloodthirsty and capricious wretch by saying, that he was a concentration of the darkest vices which disfigure our nature; brutally savage; utterly remorseless, sparing neither helplessness nor innocence; reveling in carnage with more than the ferocity of a beast; abandoned to a gross licentiousness, which spurned even the commonest forms of decency; rapacious and avaricious; a crafty hypocrite and a trembling coward. In a word, he went beyond the greatest tyrants of the earth in tyranny; and in the number and diversity of his crimes, outdid its most infamous criminals. Such was the man, that until the records of Russia are forgotten in the dreamy lapse of distant centuries, the name of Ivan the Terrible will be pronounced by all posterity either with a shudder or a malediction.

## CHAPTER XII.

FEODOR IVANOVICH ASCENDS THE THRONE; BORIS GODUNOF BECOMES CHIEF MINISTER AND ACTUAL RULER OF THE EMPIRE; HE AIMS AT THE CROWN; MURDER OF THE CZAREVITCH DMITRI; BORIS IS BELIEVED TO HAVE INSTIGATED THE CRIME; ATROCITIES AT UGLITCH; BORIS DRIVES BACK THE TARTARS FROM BEFORE THE WALLS OF MOSCOW; BORIS CAUSES THE ISSUE OF AN EDICT WHICH CONVERTS THE PEASANTRY INTO SERFS; FEODOR PROPOSED FOR ELECTION AS KING OF POLAND; DEATH OF FEODOR, AND EXTINCTION OF THE DYNASTY OF RURIC.

THE royal house of Ruric was virtually extinguished on the death of Ivan IV., though that event did not absolutely take place until seven years later. The deceased monarch left two sons, Feodor and Dmitri, or Demetrius; the latter the offspring of his father's seventh marriage, and an infant only two years of age.

Feodor Ivanovich, though he had reached the age of twenty-seven, was altogether incapable of directing the affairs of state. Extremely feeble, both in body and mind, he seems to have been not far above that point from which feebleness of intellect degenerates into idiotcy. Pliant, timid, superstitious, and devout, he was better fitted to be an obscure monk than the sovereign of a vast empire. In early life, his chief amusement was to ascend the towers of churches, and ring or strike the bells; a silliness in which he frequently

passed hours of his time. Though this miserable creature was married, such was his state of debility, that there was but little expectation of his having children to succeed him. He had been united, in 1580, to Irene, the sister of Boris Godunof.

As this remarkable man was in reality the new sovereign of Russia, and swayed the sceptre which the feeble Feodor could scarcely grasp, it is necessary to bring him forward upon the canvas. He was born in 1552, of a noble family of Tartar descent. At the age of twenty-two he was attached to the court of Ivan the Terrible, in consequence of having married the daughter of Maloota Skooratoff, a favourite of the czar, and the leading actor in his atrocities. Though Boris avoided taking any part in the monstrous cruelties which disgraced the reign of Ivan, yet he contrived to insinuate himself into the good graces of that mon-



arch. So much so, that he was made one of the five members of the supreme council of state, which Ivan appointed to watch over and direct the actions of his imbecile successor. To an untiring activity, Boris united a more comprehensive mind than fell to the lot of any of his coadjutors. Versed in business and in the ways of men, possessed of an inordinate ambition—which he concealed under a veil of religion—and a grave and noble presence, he soon became the paramount member of the council, and acquired a complete ascendancy over it. By the exhibition of an assumed tenderness for the feeble-minded czar, Boris gained a yet more decided power over him, and the able minister soon became regarded as the real ruler of the empire. He received from the czar the highest titles ever bestowed upon a subject, and such enormous estates, that his wealth has been estimated as amounting to £150,000 a-year; though other writers set it down as being less than a third of that sum—which last would have been a magnificent fortune in those days. His wealth enabled him to secure numbers of active partisans and followers, amongst whom were many of the poorer nobility. It is not surprising that such a man, at such a period, should aspire to obtain the sceptre which he really wielded, and to become the acknowledged czar of the empire as well as its secret ruler. What stood between him and the throne? An idiotic and childless sovereign, and his infant brother. To an ambitious and unprincipled man, the temptation was irresistible.

Boris Godunof ruled the empire, under the name of Feodor, with an absolute sway; and, for a while, he exercised his unlimited power to the satisfaction of both boyards and people. Some jealousy necessarily existed; but the court and the first offices of the state were filled with his adherents, and all attempts to overthrow him were speedily and severely repressed. He had a politic aversion to public executions, as being calculated to deprive him of that popularity which he laboured constantly to attain. But those who were opposed to him were driven into exile, or thrown into prison, where they died suddenly, or were at other times poisoned by domestic traitors. It was soon apparent to close observers that Boris aimed at the crown, and that he was reckless as to the means by which he obtained it.

The boy Dmitri was the most serious im-

pediment to the designs of Boris, and the latter soon resolved upon removing him. Soon after the accession of Feodor, the subtle minister had removed Dmitri and his mother from the court of Moscow to a distant and obscure town called Uglitch, where they lived in a state resembling honourable banishment. For some time, Boris thought of branding the boy Dmitri with illegitimacy, on the ground that he was the son of Ivan's seventh wife—it being contrary to the canons of the Greek church for any one to marry more than thrice. He, however, abandoned this idea; because, although the marriage of the czarina was unquestionably illegal according to the laws of the church, yet, as it had been sanctioned, or at least tolerated, by the ecclesiastical authorities, they could not now pronounce it to be so without a serious loss of credit. Boris had too much need of the assistance of the priesthood to drive them to a confession of weakness or of shame. Besides this, he knew that even if the young prince was declared to be illegitimate, the people were so attached to the race of Ruric, that they would still regard the boy as the true czarevitch, and rightful successor of Feodor.

Boris therefore resolved upon another and more pitiless course. He decided on the murder of the boy. As a preliminary, he spread evil reports over the country concerning his intended victim. To inspire the people with a disgust for the young prince, the crafty minister caused it to be reported that the boy's disposition exactly resembled his father's; that he was perverse, whimsical, and savage; that he manifested a precocious delight in blood and the sight of torture, and that his favourite amusements consisted in putting domestic animals to death. Another story was spread abroad among the nobles to excite their antipathy to the boy. It was related, that while playing on the ice one day with other children, he gave orders that twenty images of men should be made of snow. To each of these he gave the name of one of the leading men of the state, and the largest of them he called Boris Godunof. Then, armed with a wooden sword, he began to hack and hew at them all. Having cut off the head of Godunof's image, he stabbed at the rest, or lopped off their feet and hands, exclaiming as he did so, "This is what you will have when I am czar." If this tale was true, it showed that



the boy possessed an evil disposition; and it has an air of probability when related of a child of Ivan's—especially of one born during the latter part of the life of that monster. We have, however, no means of judging as to its truth or falsehood; but we know that it was freely circulated in Moscow by the agents of the man who had an interest that it should be believed.

When the minds of the people had been sufficiently prepared, the tragical catastrophe followed. Dmitri, now ten years old, was playing one afternoon in May, 1591, with four other boys, in the courtyard of the palace of Uglitch—a large enclosure containing several detached dwellings, irregularly placed. His governess and two other women were also near him at the time; but all of them lost sight of him for a moment. When last seen before the event we are about to speak of, he had been amusing himself by cutting a piece of wood with a knife. Suddenly one of the women saw him struggling on the ground bathed in blood, which was flowing from a large wound in his throat. The unhappy boy, unable to articulate, died almost immediately, of course without being able to explain how he came by so terrible an injury. The shrieks of the women brought the mother of the prince to the spot, who at once denounced one Michael Bitiagofski, a man whom Boris had placed in the palace of Uglitch, as the murderer of her son. The alarm-bell was rung, and in a short time the courtyard was thronged with servants and townspeople, who, supposing the palace to be on fire, had hurried to the place with forks and hatchets. Bitiagofski, his son, and some of his followers, came among the rest. Raising his voice above the tumult, he shouted that the prince had killed himself by falling on his knife in a fit of epilepsy; a disorder to which he was known to be subject. This ready explanation of an event concerning which he could, if innocent, know no more than others, instantly aroused the suspicions of the distracted mother, "No, no!" she cried: "There"—pointing to Bitiagofski—"there is the murderer!" The accusation was at once believed, and the excited crowd rushed upon him with uplifted weapons. The startled assassin (for very little doubt can be entertained that he was such) fled to one of the houses in the courtyard, and barred himself in. He could not, however, elude the fury of the mob, who burst the

door, and massacred him and his son on the spot. The excitement of the crowd was uncontrollable; and they hacked to death every one who was known to belong to the presumed murderer, or who dared to say a word in his behalf. Even the daughters of Bitiagofski were with great difficulty rescued from the mob by the priests of the neighbouring church, to which the blood-bedabbled corpse of the young prince was carried. His governess was savagely beaten; and her son, who was on friendly terms with Bitiagofski, cruelly murdered.

So tragical an event demanded the strictest investigation; but the weak Feodor left the matter entirely in the hands of Boris. This minister immediately appointed a commission, consisting of two boyards, to conduct the inquiry. Unfortunately for his good name, they were both men entirely devoted to his interests. The inquiry was conducted in secret, without any examination of the body, or comparison of the wound with the weapon said to have inflicted it, or indeed any rigid attempt to ascertain the truth. Under such circumstances, it is difficult to resist a suspicion that the verdict had been prearranged. It was, that Prince Dmitri had met his death in the way declared by Bitiagofski; that is, by a wound accidentally inflicted upon himself during a fit of epilepsy.

The czar Feodor remained satisfied with this report; and the easy patriarch and bishops unanimously adopted it. The latter even added, that the people of Uglitch deserved to be put to death for their treason in murdering the czar's officers;\* though this, they said, was a matter which concerned the secular jurisdiction. Some of the persons thus prejudged were brought to trial before the supreme council. Amongst them were the two brothers of the dowager-czarina. The object to be obtained by these trials was to clear the name of Bitiagofski (and, necessarily, that of his high-placed master) from the suspicion of having murdered the czarevitch; and to convince every one interested in the affair, that the boy came to his death in the course of nature. Certain witnesses deposed that Michael and Gregory, the brothers of the czarina, influenced by a fraudulent desire to

\* Bitiagofski and his followers held in the household of the prince appointments which had been conferred upon them by Boris; that is, nominally by the czar.



prove that the young prince had been murdered, had produced knives, sabres, and other weapons, smeared with the blood of a fowl, and pretended that they had seen them in the hands of the persons put to death in the tumult at Uglitch. The trial was as unsatisfactory as the investigation; and both were doubtless instigated for the same purpose. The brothers of the czarina were sent to distant prisons; and she herself to adopt the dismal seclusion of a convent. As to the inhabitants of Uglitch, they were punished with an atrocious and indiscriminate severity. More than 200 of them were executed, and many others had their tongues cut out, or were incarcerated in dungeons. Some fled in terror; but the remainder were sent to the newly-discovered country of Siberia, there to pass their lives. Thus a town, said to contain 30,000 persons, was converted into a desert;—a wild act of fury, which gave rise to rumours that Boris had exterminated a people who were too numerous to suborn, and destroyed a whole city to deface even the mute memorial of his guilt. He had overacted his part; and from that time was generally regarded as an assassin.

While those who dared to express the suspicions they entertained of the guilt of Boris were seldom able to elude his vengeance, he showed a great anxiety to reward his adherents, and to gain new ones. Nearly every powerful offender against the laws, who applied to him, was sure of protection. The documents granting pardon to such persons, always declared that these acts of grace were due to his intercession with the czar; but his name never appeared in the decrees of condemnation, where it was always declared that the punishment was ordered by the boyards. The regent (for so Boris was in effect) adopted many other modes of procuring popularity. The same year that his erroneous policy converted Uglitch into a collection of deserted ruins, a tremendous fire broke out at Moscow and destroyed a considerable portion of the city. Boris expressed great sympathy with the sufferers from this calamity, distributed pecuniary assistance amongst them, exempted them from taxes, and even rebuilt whole streets at his own expense.

Before this eventful year (1591) passed away, Russia was invaded by Kassim Gherei, khan of the Crimea, who, at the head of a powerful army, directed his march upon Moscow. The Russians were in a state of

despair; for their army was in a neglected state, and there was no commander of reputation to lead it. The vacant-minded Feodor, when applied to concerning what should be done, replied, that "the saints who protected Russia, would fight for her." Boris stood aloof sufficiently to make the people feel their weakness and their dependence upon him. He then showed himself fully equal to the emergency. Reanimating the drooping courage of the people, and imparting something of his own activity to all with whom he came in contact, he effected wonders in the space of a few days. Within that brief space, Moscow was surrounded by palisades and redoubts, and defended by numerous forces and a formidable artillery. A new spirit animated the people; and, influenced by him, cowards became men. When the Tartars attacked the city, they were repulsed with so severe a loss, that they dared not attempt a second assault. After several days spent in hesitation, the invaders turned to depart. They were not suffered to go scathless. The troops of Boris attacked them during their retreat, and converted it into a disorderly rout. Confusion was followed by carnage, and scarcely a third of the Tartar army reached home again. The imbecile Feodor, though grateful to his preserver, thought that the saints had discomfited the foe; while the common people said that Boris had brought in the Tartars, in order to efface the remembrance of the death of the boy-prince Dmitri.

Notwithstanding that the feeble constitution of the czar had led his subjects to believe it to be impossible for him to become a father, yet, in the year 1592, it was unexpectedly announced that the czarina Irene had given birth to a daughter. This circumstance was a formidable obstacle to the designs of Boris. The people ever suspected him of acting treacherously, and even worse when it answered his purpose. At first it was rumoured that he had caused a female child to be substituted for the male of which it was averred his sister had become the mother. After a few days the infant died, and then it was said he had poisoned it. It is probable that both of these reports were idle calumnies. Certainly, if the last was true, the first was false; for it is not likely so acute a man would have committed a crime which the necessity of several accomplices rendered easy of detection, at the very time when he contemplated another



crime which would have rendered the first quite unnecessary. No motives of humanity, or feelings of conscience, would have deterred Boris from the murder of an infant which stood in his path to power; but nothing is more probable than that the child of a father whose debility of nature hovered on the verge of exhaustion, should expire soon after birth. Though the czar was merciless when under the influence of his master-passion—ambition—yet he did not, like Ivan the Terrible, love crime for its own sake. There were occasional touches of softness in that iron nature; and, like the remorseless and sensual Egyptian in one of our modern romances, Boris would have stepped out of his path to avoid crushing a worm, though he had but just consigned one whom he deemed his enemy to a lingering death. Such are the dark enigmas of human nature!

The year 1592 was memorable for an event which, though not very seriously regarded at the time, was fraught with deep and calamitous mischief for the future; an event, the effects of which, even at this hour, rankle deeply in the social condition of the Russian people, and which has produced a state of things at once perplexing to the government, dangerous to the security of society, obstructive to national advancement, and formed a reproach to the empire over the rest of Europe. We allude to that measure which converted the peasants of Russia into serfs, and which was deliberately framed by Boris as a bribe to the boyards and landed proprietors, as it increased the wealth of the rich at the price of the personal liberty of the poor. Up to this time the Russian peasantry enjoyed that freedom which arises from the absence of oppressive restrictions. They had the natural right of being enabled to leave the estate on which they lived or had been born, and enter the service of another master, if they desired to do so. Certainly the liberty of the peasantry was of a passive and negative, rather than active and positive character. They did not enjoy liberty on any reasonable basis; but were free rather because they had been overlooked; because no powerful party in the state saw any reason for restraining or extinguishing the barren freedom enjoyed by them. The thinness of the population, and the vast distances which separated the towns and villages, and almost prevented communication, rendered co-operation among the peasantry an impossibility, and public

opinion scarcely more than an imagination. Thus the peasants were politically nothing; and though not slaves, they did not possess the privileges of freemen. The peasantry had not unfrequently availed themselves of their slender right of moving from place to place, with the natural hope of improving their condition; but their doing so diminished the wealth and personal influence of the noble on whose estates they dwelt, and who had already but a very small part of his lands subjected to any profitable use. When land was so cheap as to be almost worthless, men came to be regarded as valuable. Without them the soil was unreclaimed desert; but if they surrendered ever so small a portion of what they raised from it to the owner, their presence was in some measure productive of wealth. Boris, therefore, to conciliate the boyards—and especially that inferior order of them who, without ancestral distinctions, had risen by craft or merit to their position—made a law by which the peasant was bound to the soil, and thus sunk into the serf. Before this there had been domestic slaves in Russia, as we have already stated; but from this time only is the existence of the predial serfs to be dated. Boris coloured his tyranny by an excuse which bore an air of soundness. The peasantry of Russia were in the habit of migrating towards the south, in consequence of the mildness of the climate and other presumed advantages to be found there. This was necessarily injurious to the less favoured bulk of the country—a circumstance which was put forward by Boris as the cause of his new decree, rendering the people irremovable from the domains on which they were located. The immediate result was, however, the very reverse of that anticipated by the regent. The peasants fled by thousands to escape slavery—an act to which they were encouraged by those landed proprietors who wanted hands to cultivate their estates. Unjust legislation seldom promotes the end for which it was designed; its reaction is always dangerous, and its remote working pregnant with unforeseen evils.

We alluded to the patriarch of the Russian church—an ecclesiastical dignity which was first used in the reign of Feodor. Prior to this time, the Russian church derived what was assumed to be its divine power through the medium of the patriarch of Constantinople, who consecrated the metropolitan of Moscow. But the supremacy of



the Greek patriarch was almost a titular affair after the city of Constantinople had passed by conquest into the hands of the Turks. Boris had need of the services of the church to assist him in carrying his ambitious designs to a successful result. Jeremy, the patriarch of Constantinople, having arrived at Moscow to collect alms for the erection of churches, it occurred to Boris that it would be an excellent thing to induce him to consecrate a Russian patriarch who, of course, the regent took good care should be entirely the creature of his will, and devoted to his interests. He accordingly induced the childish and devout Feodor, who was delighted at the presence of the Greek patriarch, to load him with honours and rich donations. The head of a once powerful, but then comparatively ruined church, showed his gratitude by acceding to the suggestions of Boris. Moscow accordingly had its patriarch—a dignity which lasted until the time of Peter the Great, who abolished it, and blended the chief authority of the Russian church with the absolute power of the czar.

Russia prospered under the shadowy domination of Feodor. This must necessarily be attributed to the able administration of Boris, who was czar in all but the name, and wanted but the claim of a legitimate sovereign to have been an illustrious one. Commerce was protected and rendered secure. Smolensk was fortified to a state of presumed impregnability. The Tartars were confined within their own domains by strong military posts. Fortresses were erected at the foot of the Caucasian range, into the regions of which Russia made her first abortive attempt to penetrate; and the arts and arms of the empire, rude though they were, carried into the wilds of Siberia. The Swedes were driven into Narva, and closer diplomatic relations were entered into with foreign courts, and especially with that of England. But one of the most remarkable events of the reign of Feodor was the attempt of Boris to get his master, or rather creature, the czar, elected king of Poland. Boris proposed to the states of Lithuania and Poland, that if they elected Feodor their king, he would unite all the forces of Russia with those of Poland, and conquer the Crimea for the former power; and Walla-

chia, Moldavia, and Hungary for the latter. The proposed union would probably have created a power perfectly capable of accomplishing the projected conquests. The proposals of the czar also found many partisans among the Poles, and were readily accepted by the Lithuanians. The union might, in fact, have been accomplished, but that the Poles were disgusted with the overbearing conduct of the Muscovite ambassadors, which induced them to elect Sigismund Vasa, Prince of Sweden, as their king, instead of Feodor.

Boris had dazzled the boyards by his power, and the people by an assiduous practice of the arts of popularity. He had been long regarded as the actual ruler of the empire, whose interests he had promoted, and whose reputation he had raised in the estimation of Europe. The bulk of the Russian people looked to him as the natural successor of the childish and childless czar. Such was the state of things when, early in the year 1598, Feodor died! With the death of this nonentity the dynasty of Ruric expired, after having yielded no less than fifty-two sovereigns to part or the whole of Russia. It now terminated in weakness, in mystery, and perhaps in violence. It is impossible to say absolutely that the feeble Feodor did not come by his death naturally; but it is equally difficult not to suspect that his life was shortened by treachery. It is at least a startling coincidence, that the impotent czar lived until all the schemes of Boris were matured, and that he died exactly at the time when the interests of that ambitious man required that he should die. A reasonable presumption therefore exists, that the life of Feodor was practised upon, and that the crafty minister was the assassin.

Some comparatively obscure members of the race of Ruric still existed, but they were in no condition to set up a claim to the vacant throne; they had, in fact, become private persons. Virtually the family was extinguished. No powerful prince existed who could legally claim the Russian sceptre; and the succession being thus broken, the people were at liberty either to change the form of government, or elect a new czar from themselves. With this event terminates a natural era of the history of the empire of whose progress we are writing.



## CHAPTER XIII.

BORIS GODUNOF ELECTED CZAR; HE OVERAWES THE TARTARS OF THE CRIMEA; WISDOM OF THE EARLY PART OF HIS RULE; HE BECOMES DISLIKED; A DREADFUL FAMINE PREVAILS FOR THREE YEARS; THE COUNTRY INFESTED BY FORMIDABLE BANDS OF ROBBERS; BORIS BECOMES DESPOTIC; A YOUTH IN POLAND CLAIMS TO BE PRINCE DMITRI, THE SON OF IVAN IV.; HE ENTERS RUSSIA AT THE HEAD OF A SMALL ARMY; OBTAINS A VICTORY AT NOVGOROD; IS DEFEATED AT DOBRYNITCHI; GENERAL FEELING IN HIS FAVOUR; SUDDEN DEATH OF THE CZAR; HIS SON FEODOR SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE; HE IS DEPOSED, AND DMITRI PROCLAIMED CZAR; EARLY POPULARITY OF HIS RULE; HE IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY THE WIDOW OF IVAN AS HER SON; HIS IMPRUDENCE MAKES HIM UNPOPULAR; CONSPIRACY AGAINST HIM; HIS MARRIAGE; INSURRECTION, AND MURDER OF DMITRI.

BORIS GODUNOF was well prepared for a state of things which he had at least anticipated if not brought about. He, however, affected to be quite overcome with grief on account of the death of the last lineal descendant of Ruric. In this assumed despair he retired to a monastery, and declared his intention of spending the remainder of his life in religious seclusion. The late czar had bequeathed the throne to his widow Irene, who was immediately proclaimed sovereign. But she appears to have shrunk from a responsibility she felt herself unable to bear; and, after a few days, she followed her brother into retirement, and expressed a firm resolution to take the veil. She was sincere, and resisted all entreaties to alter her determination.

The eyes of the people and of the lesser nobles were now turned towards Boris as the most fit person to fill the vacant throne. The greater nobles, the ancient princes of Russia, looked for advice at this juncture to the patriarch, who, in addition to the authority necessarily attaching to his holy office and dignity, had acquired a considerable influence over both nobles and people. Indeed, so much was he respected, that no opposition was anticipated to the election of the noble whom he nominated.

It would seem that the election was by no means a general act of the people; for those permitted to express an opinion must have been very few in number. The deputies of the towns of Russia, and the princes and boyards of the empire, assembled in the house of the patriarch six weeks after the death of Feodor. The greatest anxiety existed on the part of the people to know whom the patriarch would recommend to their choice as the future czar. Most of the nobles, however, were prepared for the result that followed; for they knew that the patriarch was but a creature of the late

minister, and would act according to his instructions. After a pious prelude, he named Boris as the wisest man in the country, and the one most deserving the confidence of the people. The name was hailed with clamorous applause, which was repeated in other places by mercenary agents, as soon as the news was known. No one was bold enough to offer opposition; and thus, on the 17th of February, 1598, was Boris Godunof (notwithstanding his Tartar descent) elected Czar of Russia! With a remembrance of his declared intention of devoting his life, in seclusion, to the exercise of piety, public prayers were offered that he might be induced to accept the throne.

When Boris was informed that he was chosen to wield the sceptre of the empire, he declined to accept it. Like our Richard III., to whom he has been compared, he affected to despise the prize he longed for. He thanked the people for so distinguished an honour, but he begged with humility to decline it. This stratagem was perfectly understood by the patriarch and his other friends, who were not so dull as to take the ambitious schemer at his word. The next day the systematic priest returned, accompanied by the principal clergy and nobility, and followed by immense crowds of the people. Entering the church of the convent, preceded by a train of monks carrying the cross and a multitude of saintly relics, the patriarch performed a religious service, and then again requested Boris to accede to the wishes of the nobles and people, and accept the throne. The answer was another refusal, which was persisted in, notwithstanding the entreaties and tears of the chief clergy, and the enthusiasm of the people who surrounded the convent. The crafty Boris was so certain of the game he was playing—had grasped with so firm a hand all the links of power, that he seems



to have felt a pleasure in obstinately refusing a sceptre he so ardently desired. For nearly six weeks he kept up the excitement of the people, and repeated, at intervals, the farce of refusal. At length his sister, the widowed Irene, added her entreaties to those of the patriarch and the populace. Then, with an appearance of the greatest humility, he exclaimed—"The will of God be done!" and appeared rather resigned to make a sacrifice than to accept a position of great power and dignity. Boris ascended the throne amidst a chorus of adulation from the deceived people; but he continued to show himself so able a ruler as to justify their apparent choice. His first act was to repay the populace for their enthusiasm by means of pageantries, public shows, and acts of grace to offenders. He outdid all his predecessors in the splendour and hospitality of the entertainments which he provided for the people and the soldiery, and in the affability of his bearing in public.

Successful usurpation commonly depraves the character of the man who profits by it, and brings evils upon the people who suffer it. Of this particular instance of triumphant political intrigue, it has been observed—"A crown, obtained by indirect and fraudulent measures, could not be preserved without tyranny. Boris, conscious of the jealousies which his elevation engendered in the minds of the nobles, and especially in the family of the Romanoffs, who were allied to the race of Ruric, but not to the Moscow line, was constantly haunted by apprehensions, and sought to lose them in the revel, and to propitiate them by the sacrifice of all persons whom he suspected. Had he been a legitimate sovereign, he would have conferred lasting benefits upon his country; because he was a wise and paternal ruler in all matters apart from his personal affairs. He bestowed considerable pains on many laudable measures of improvement; but these were so sullied by acts of merciless revenge, to which he was moved by the danger in which he was placed by his usurpation, that it is difficult to separate his merits from his crimes."

At first the new czar seemed likely to retain the popularity he enjoyed on ascending the throne. Scarcely had his coronation taken place before the Tartars of the Crimea threatened a descent upon the southern part of Russia. The people stood in awe of these turbulent and savage foes; but Boris promptly assembled so numerous

an army, that the Tartars were dismayed in their turn, and abandoned their intended enterprise; and the khan, instead of attacking him, sued for a continuance of peace. This incident won for Boris, at least to some extent, the gratitude of the people, and the admiration of the soldiery.

While on one side Boris hurled back the savage barbarism of Asia, on the other he courted the arts and civilisation of Europe. Before his whole time was engrossed by troubles at home, he strove earnestly to extend the relations of Russia with the great powers of the continent. He was also anxious to establish himself on the throne, and secure it to his descendants by promoting a matrimonial alliance between his own family and some reigning house of Europe. With this object he invited Gustavus, son of Eric, the deposed king of Sweden, to his court, where he treated that accomplished prince with great honour. Extensive estates were even conferred upon him; but as the prince was unwilling to become a tool of the Muscovite policy against his native country, he fell into disgrace, and was exiled. Boris then proposed an alliance between his daughter Xenia, a princess of great beauty, and the Duke John, brother of the King of Denmark and of the queen of James I. of England. This proposal was assented to both by the king and the duke; but it could not be carried into effect on account of the premature death of the latter. Amongst the diplomatic negotiations of Boris with foreign powers, should be mentioned his frequent, though desultory communications with Austria, to bring about a league against the Turks. Some negotiations with Persia on the same subject were equally unsuccessful. Like the fierce Ivan, Boris exhibited a decided partiality towards the government and people of England. This seems to have been, at least to some extent, reciprocated; for, in the year 1603, Queen Elizabeth proposed to the czar a marriage between his son and a young English lady of rank, then only eleven years old.

The first two years of the reign of Boris were attended with remarkable prosperity to the empire. Though the character of the czar has been variously drawn, and he has even been represented as a savage tyrant, yet during this period he ever leaned rather towards clemency than severity. He laboured to raise Russia in the scale of nations, by importing into it the civilisation



of the most polished of the neighbouring states. He conceived the plan of establishing universities, where the young Muscovites should be instructed in foreign languages and the sciences. He even sent into Germany for teachers for the intended schools; but his project failed on account of the vehement opposition of the clergy, who considered the measure as an innovation dangerous to religion. Notwithstanding this obstruction from a quarter whence it ought not to have arisen, he sent eighteen young men of noble families to be educated in Germany, England, and France. He further showed his desire to promote the elevation of the empire and people by an anxiety to attract to Russia all gifted foreigners, such as physicians, engineers, and able artisans. In these agents of the country's progress he placed great confidence, and frequently conversed with them with familiarity. Indeed, this must have been a period of calm, if not of happiness to him, as well as of prosperity to the country; but unfortunately it was not destined to last, and a darker time—a time of calamity and terror—was at hand.

Jealousies against the elected sovereign had existed from the first; but this was to be expected, especially in a country which contained a nobility so turbulent as that of Russia. Boris constantly experienced some incident which reminded him that he was not regarded as altogether a legitimate sovereign; that he could not plead either divine right or ancestral claims to the throne. From this feeling arose the resistance of the clergy to his educational innovations. It was natural for ignorant and narrow-minded men to oppose the spread of information among the people; for persons of this description ever dread novelties, however wise or brilliant, and "cling to error like a bat to a dead bough." But it did not proceed from this alone; but from the fact that the clergy, released from the presence of a sovereign who ruled them by a presumed mission from heaven, and influenced by the jealousy of which we have spoken, began to exhibit uneasiness and impatience of control. A similar feeling animated the boyards, some of whom were accused by their slaves of being ill-disposed to the czar. Boris punished them with merciless severity; some he banished or imprisoned, while others were consigned to the hands of the executioner, and that frequently without trial or other preliminary

ceremony. These actions turned indifference or ill-feeling into hatred; and he who had been regarded as an adventurer, was now secretly denounced as a tyrant.

In countries where agriculture has scarcely risen to the dignity of an art, where commerce only just exists, and communication between distant parts is so difficult as to be impracticable for all ordinary purposes, a scanty harvest is necessarily followed by severe distress, and a repetition of it by famine. A heavy calamity of this nature now fell upon Russia. The harvests of 1601 and 1602 were meagre in the extreme. A general famine was the result; a famine so terrible, that its horrors, as described by eye-witnesses, seem almost incredible. As is commonly the case, its ravages were followed by those of pestilence, both of which afflicted the people for a period of three years. In this time of prolonged misery, Boris acted in a most commendable manner, and showed himself not only the sovereign, but the father of the nation. He employed himself incessantly in inventing modes of relief, and he caused immense quantities of provisions to be distributed daily. These were paid for, to a large extent, out of his own private wealth, which we stated to be very great. He also levied a kind of rate upon the rich, to ameliorate the miseries of the poor. The nobles and clergy, so far from imitating his noble example, displayed a grasping avariciousness, which induced them not only to hold aloof from the miseries that surrounded them, but to take advantage of those very miseries by exacting enormous prices for their stores of grain. Boris punished them for this selfish conduct by compelling them to dispose of their stores of grain to him at a low price, the better to enable him to distribute it gratuitously among the starving people.

Means of this nature, necessarily limited and inefficient, were eventually exhausted. Still the terrible famine prevailed; and the number of its victims increased. Half a million of people are computed to have died of hunger in Moscow alone. The attenuated dead lay unburied in the streets and squares, rotting in loathsome heaps. The mouths of many of the shrunken corpses were full of hay, straw, or the filthiest offal, which they were vainly endeavouring to eat when death terminated their terrible and degrading misery. The pangs arising from prolonged hunger must indeed be dreadful; for they induce men and women to cast



aside those antipathies which are so deeply woven into our instincts as to be regarded as natural, and therefore unalterable laws. Not only was strange and loathsome food consumed at Moscow, but the frightful practice of cannibalism arose in that city. In many houses, the person who had suffered least from the effects of the famine, was secretly slain, to furnish food for the rest. So far was this terrible practice carried—so far had the tyrannical cravings of hunger subdued the natural bonds of affection, that parents devoured their own children, and children their parents; or, still worse, *sold* them for the same revolting purpose to others, that they might purchase bread with the price of the blood of those who, till hunger had made them mad, were dearest to them. A Russian chronicler relates, that he saw a woman in the open street tearing with her teeth the flesh of a living child she carried in her arms. Another mentions, that four women having decoyed a peasant into their house under pretence of purchasing food from him, killed him and his horse, and dragged the two carcasses into their ice-pit, to serve them as food.

At length this time of horror passed away, and the diminished population was relieved from the incessant cravings of hunger by the return of nature to her customary beneficence. But so severe a calamity had produced a general disorganisation, and the country was infested by bands of robbers, who had taken to that lawless life in consequence of the drying up of the regular channels of industry. The chief of these gangs of ruffians, who was named Khlopko, became so formidable, that it was necessary to send an army to subdue him. He was defeated and captured in a regular battle not far from Moscow, in which the commander of the czar's forces was killed. This engagement, however, by no means exterminated the robbers, who continued their depredations and outrages to a great extent, especially in the border provinces, where they were further from the avenging arm of authority. But the existence of this social scourge must not be attributed to the famine alone. It arose partly from unwise and unjust legislation. The ordinance by which Boris had, during the reign of Feodor, bound the peasant to the soil, and converted him from a state of negative freedom to that of absolute serfdom, had induced great numbers

to take to flight. Of these, many doubtless settled down peaceably upon the lands of other proprietors; but many also joined the wandering bands of robbers which famine, pestilence, and a stoppage of the ordinary business of society had engendered. This circumstance led to very severe measures against these barbarous but miserable men. An inquisitorial search after runaways was established, and the bitterness of despotic rule was felt even down to the lowest link of the social chain. This, too, to such an extent, that it has been plaintively observed by a sympathetic writer, that "the Russian nation was now no longer anything but a hierarchy of slaves. Thenceforth there was no intercourse; none of those public meetings in which the youthful part of society, at least, orally acquired knowledge; no compacts to protect the weak, no asylum for them. Russia became sad and sullen; the minstrels, who had been wont to traverse the country, now disappeared; their songs of war and the chase, and even of love, were heard no longer. It is only in the chronicles of the time that we discover the traces of those perished manners, those forgotten songs: on meeting with them, the national historian is surprised and affected, and mournfully exclaims, 'that in these recollections, the Russia of the present day, mute and enslaved, finds but the image of an object which no longer exists—the echo of a voice which no longer vibrates on her ear.'"

Boris was driven into despotism by the disaffection of the nobles and people whom he ruled. His benevolent exertions during the period of the famine, were regarded with malice by the former, who set them down to the score of a subtle policy. Their murmurs were no longer uttered in private, but even assumed a threatening tone. The signs of disaffection were no longer to be misunderstood. In this position Boris followed the example of Ivan, and resolved to appal those whose confidence he could not win. Many of the proudest grandees were consigned by him to the hands of the executioner, and a number of capital punishments were crowded into a short space of time. The danger to which he was undoubtedly exposed was magnified by alarm, and thus all the latent cruelty of his nature brought into action. He even rose up from table at his own banquets, and denounced some of his guests as traitors, who



were immediately seized upon by his followers, and dragged away to dungeons or to death. Despotism thus became universal, and noble and peasant were alike oppressed; not from any desire of the czar for such a result, but as an inevitable consequence of the disorder arising from usurpation. Some measures of this period were remarkably severe and sanguinary. With an unreasoning and capricious ferocity, it was enacted, that all the members of a family were held to be involved in the punishment of a single member. To restrain the peasantry in their natural exodus from bondage, every Russian who passed beyond the frontiers was denounced as a rebel and a heretic. One of the injudicious measures of Boris, and that which perhaps more than anything else contributed to his unpopularity, was the whimsical one of punishing drunkenness with death.

Something of the despotism of the crown was transferred even to the heads of families; probably with a view to win their allegiance by sanctioning existing barbarous practices. The peasant within his own hut was invested with all the powers of a despot. Not only was he permitted to inflict summary chastisement upon his wife and children, but also to sell the latter into slavery—privileges which were, however, restrained by the edict which converted the father himself into a serf. Yet the merciless sway of Boris must be regarded as a consequence of his situation, which exposed him to hazards from which he could not escape except by some such decisive and terrible measures.

Throughout the whole of Russia there prevailed that sort of feeling which so often precedes insurrections. In 1604, a singular rumour was brought from the frontiers of Lithuania, and spread with surprising rapidity throughout the empire. It was to the effect, that Prince Dmitri, who was supposed to have been murdered at Uglitch, was alive; and making preparations in Poland to recover the throne of his ancestors. Several versions exist as to the way in which this presumed discovery was first made. The one generally regarded by Russian historians as authentic, runs thus. A stranger having fallen seriously ill in a Polish town, sent for a confessor, and informed him that he was the youngest son of the czar Ivan, and consequently legitimate heir to the Russian throne. This information the confessor communicated to

Prince Adam Wiszniowiecki, who, on the recovery of the stranger, sent for him to substantiate his statement. The latter obeyed, and stated that his physician, Simon, having been tampered with by Boris, had affected to comply with the regent's designs against the life of the heir-presumptive, but only that he might the more effectually frustrate them. With a forgetfulness of the actual circumstances of the case, he added, that on the night appointed for the murder, Simon put the child of a serf into his young master's bed, and it was this unhappy boy who fell a victim to the assassin. Simon, satisfied of the uselessness of appealing to the feeble-minded czar Feodor against so powerful and unscrupulous a man as Boris, fled with Prince Dmitri from Uglitch, and committed him to the care of a loyal gentleman, who, for his better protection, made him enter a monastery. The stranger admitted that this gentleman and the physician were both dead; but in confirmation of his narrative he produced a Russian seal, bearing the arms and the name of the czarevitch, and a gold cross, adorned with jewels of great value, which he said was the baptismal gift of his godfather, the Prince Ivan Mstislavski.

Notwithstanding the suspicious nature of this story, the Polish noble was convinced of its truth. The plausible manner of the stranger won upon him, and the costly diamond cross seemed an irresistible evidence in favour of the truth of the pretensions of the young man; for how, he reasoned, could such a jewel have come into his hands unless he really was the czarevitch? Prince Wiszniowiecki was convinced. He treated his mysterious visitor with great distinction, presented him with money, raiment, horses, and a retinue suitable to his supposed birth. On taking him to the residence of his brother Prince Constantine, a Russian fugitive, named Pietrovski, made a voluntary statement, that he had formerly been in attendance on the czarevitch Dmitri, of whose identity with the youth before him he was perfectly convinced. These coincidences were certainly remarkable. The murdered czarevitch, if alive, would have been about twenty-two years old; which was the apparent age of the stranger. The latter had a wart on the forehead, another under the right eye, and one arm a little longer than the other: the son of the czar Ivan was said to have been marked in the same way.



The pretender—for such he assuredly was—soon subdued all doubts in the Polish nobles, who thronged to Prince Constantine's mansion, to be presented to the man they regarded as the rightful czar of Russia, and to offer their services to him. The bold intriguer performed his assumed part with consummate skill—a representation in which he was assisted by nature. Even his gestures and tone of voice were said to have resembled those of the murdered prince. His deportment was perfectly in accordance with his alleged rank. Possessed of a fine figure, an insinuating manner, and a ready speech, he was always perfectly at his ease amongst the noble persons with whom he now associated. He had been liberally educated for those days; spoke both Polish and Russian, had a slight smattering of Latin, wrote a bold and rapid hand, was well versed in the history of Russia, and in the genealogies of all the great families. In addition to this, he ingratiated himself not only with the Polish nobles, but with the Roman pontiff, by representing that he was disposed to embrace the catholic faith; and that, should he be so fortunate as to recover the throne of his ancestors, he would endeavour to bring his subjects into the communion of the Roman church. Such was the success of the assumed Dmitri, that the Palatine of Sandomir, a Polish noble of great wealth and influence, promised him the hand of his daughter Marina when he should become czar—a promise to which the lady cheerfully assented. The palatine even presented the young adventurer to the King of Poland (Sigismund III.), who was delighted with an incident which promised an opportunity of gratifying a dislike he entertained towards Boris. Sigismund having received the youth at a solemn audience, and listened to a statement of his pretended birth and misfortunes, observed—"God preserve thee, Dmitri, Prince of Muscovy; thy birth is known to us, and attested by satisfactory evidence: we assign thee a pension of 40,000 florins; and, as our friend and guest, we permit thee to accept the counsels and services of our subjects."

In the May of 1604, Dmitri (as we must call him) signed a promise of marriage to Marina, the daughter of the Palatine Sandomir, in which he engaged to confer on her the towns of Novgorod and Pskov as a wedding gift, and to pay her father a million of Polish florins (about £160,000) as soon as he should have ascended his throne.

The following month he signed another document, by which he engaged to cede the province of Severia to the palatine and the King of Poland; and at the same time he privately abjured the Greek faith, and was admitted as a member of the Roman church in the palace of the nuncio. By these equivocal acts he secured the services of a small Polish army; but they eventually assisted in destroying his reputation.

News of Dmitri's proceedings soon reached Boris, who had excellent reasons for knowing that he was an impostor, and that the true prince had long lain in his grave. The czar denounced Dmitri as an impostor, and stated that he was a renegade monk, named Gregory Otrepief, who, on account of his bearing an accidental resemblance to the dead prince, had been led into the idea of personating him. Some mystery hangs over this question, and many inquiries have been made concerning it, but without any satisfactory result. The distinguished modern Russian historian, Karamsin, considers that Otrepief was the spurious Dmitri; other writers, who have had the advantage of being able to compare all the circumstances (many of them minute, and necessarily uninteresting to an English reader), are of opinion that the assumed Dmitri was neither what he pretended to be, nor what Boris asserted—a negative conclusion, which leaves us as much in doubt as before as to the man's actual origin.

The first proceeding of the czar Boris, with respect to Dmitri, was an unwise one. He offered a heavy bribe to Prince Wiszniewiecki and his brother Constantine, if they would give the impostor up to him. This they indignantly refused, and the circumstance only had the effect of confirming their belief in the representations of their *protégé*. Boris then proclaimed Dmitri to be an adventurer; and employed a number of spies, who were armed with authority to seize and put him to death. He proceeded further, by prohibiting all intercourse between the Poles and the Russians, compelled the patriarch to anathematise "the rascally disrobed monk, the apostate rebel and magician, who wished to introduce the Latin heresy into Russia, and to build catholic churches in the orthodox land." Boris also procured the testimony of the living mother of the murdered prince to her son's death, and wrote a letter to the Polish monarch, entreating his majesty to withdraw his protection from the impostor. These efforts



failed to produce the desired effect, and indeed only more effectually aroused the curiosity of the Russian people, who, tired of what they regarded as an illegitimate government, were disposed to give credence to a claim which might overturn it. For this reason, also, the discontented nobles lent an ear to a tale which they did not really believe.

Dmitri was unabashed by the denunciation of Boris, which he affected to treat with calm contempt. He again asserted his claim to the Russian throne, and detailed the whole story of his life, which he said Boris endeavoured to discredit from motives of selfish fear. He spoke of the extraordinary interposition of Providence, which had, he said, preserved him for the sacred purpose of rescuing his faithful subjects from the thralldom of usurpation; and reiterated his determination never to cease in his efforts to restore the throne of Muscovy to the race of Ruric.

Unquestionably, the pretender was a man of remarkable talents and activity. While Boris was vainly endeavouring to blacken his reputation, he was busily occupied in gathering recruits to his standard. He knew that the Russian people were favourably disposed towards him, and likely to rise in his favour if he appeared among them. Accordingly, on the 31st of October, 1604, he crossed the Russian frontier with his little army, which consisted of about 3,000 Polish horse, 500 foot of the same nation, and a few thousand Russian refugees. It would have been an act of madness to invade so vast an empire with such a petty force, had not Dmitri really won the attachment of the common people, most of whom, by this time, firmly believed that he was the son of the czar Ivan. His forces increased rapidly on his march, and town after town received him with enthusiasm. The barbarian inhabitants not only presented him with bread and salt, as tokens of allegiance, but placed their governors and other officers, bound and gagged, in his hands. The pretender immediately liberated these unfortunate gentlemen, and behaved to them with great courtesy—a policy which brought with it its own reward.

Boris had been unwilling to increase the importance of his rival by making any great military preparation; and it was not until the 23rd of November, by which time Dmitri had arrived before the walls of Novgorod, that he met with any opposing force.

Peter Basmanof, an able general, had thrown himself into that city with a body of no more than 500 Strelitz. On being summoned to surrender in the name of the czar and the grand prince Dmitri, he replied, "The grand prince and czar is at Moscow, and your Dmitri is a robber, who shall be impaled, and his accomplices with him. Be off, if you value your lives." Basmanof was not to be won; and the invaders were unable to take the citadel, into which he and his troops had retired. Several weeks were passed before the fortress, and the besiegers repulsed with considerable loss in an attempt to storm it. Their enthusiasm was rapidly cooling, when it was revived by the capture of a sum of 80,000 ducats, which the czar was sending to the governors of the towns that adhered to him. The siege was renewed; and Basmanof, aware that an army was on its march from Moscow for his relief, had the address to obtain a truce for a fortnight, by promising to surrender at the end of that time, if he was not succoured.

The usurping czar had proved himself an able soldier; and if he had the energy that marked his actions in earlier years, would no doubt have destroyed his opponent. But he was no longer the man he had been; his health was broken, and his spirits crushed by the opposition with which he had had to contend. He is said to have laboured under the pangs of a guilty conscience; and it is possible that his mind was to some extent diseased. Confiding to others the command he should have assumed himself, he trusted men who were at least cold in his cause, if not absolutely averse to him.

Mstislavski, the general entrusted by Boris with the command of a large army, which he had much difficulty in collecting, arrived at Novgorod towards the close of December. Some days were passed in inactivity. The sanguine Dmitri hoped to see the hostile army adopt his cause, and arrange itself beneath his banner; while Mstislavski expected that the adherents of the pretender, who scarcely amounted to 15,000, would disperse without coming to hostilities. Both were disappointed; and on the 31st, Dmitri, whose army was not more than a third as numerous as that opposed to him, boldly led his troops into an open plain, and placed them in array of battle. Such a challenge was of course accepted, and the adversaries were soon drawn up



face to face. Before the battle, Dmitri prayed aloud before his soldiers, and then addressed them in tones of the most animating eloquence. "Almighty God!" cried he, in conclusion, "if my cause is unjust, may thy wrath fall on me alone! But thou knowest my right, and will make my arm invincible!" The strife, though fierce, was brief; for there were many among the army of Boris who trembled lest they should be fighting against the czarevitch. The brave and well-armed Polish lancers, by a desperate charge, broke the right wing of the Russian army, and drove it upon the centre, which soon fell into confusion. Prince Mstislavski strove in vain to rally his dismayed troops; and, after receiving fifteen wounds, was borne from the field. This was conclusive: the victory fell upon Dmitri; and the Russians would have been utterly routed, but that Basmanof made a sortie in their favour, set fire to the camp of the conquerors, and thus drew them from the field. By means of this *rusé*, the humbled troops of Boris were enabled to escape beneath the cover of the woods.

The pretended Dmitri conducted himself after the battle with princely moderation, and a policy which would have done credit to an older man. The prisoners taken were addressed by him with kindly familiarity, and treated as mistaken subjects, instead of as foes. He also commanded his followers to conduct themselves with humanity—a circumstance which rendered them a striking contrast to the brutal Russian soldiers, who ruthlessly slaughtered the inhabitants of those districts which had exhibited a disposition to favour the cause of the adventurer. Dmitri also actively spread abroad the idea, that his victory had been due to the fact that Providence fought upon the side of truth, and that it should, therefore, be accepted as an indication from heaven that he was undoubtedly the son of Ivan IV. This belief rapidly made way among the ignorant peasantry, who were ready, at the first opportunity, to hail him as their sovereign.

Still the position of Dmitri was but a desperate one; and he knew that he could not obtain any permanent success unless the people fell away from Boris and adopted his cause. Shortly after the battle, a mandate came from the King of Poland, commanding his subjects to return home immediately. It had been drawn from him by Boris before Sigismund knew of the

victory obtained by Dmitri, and while he was influenced by disgust at the inconceivable prolongation of the siege of such a petty fortress as that of Novgorod. The command was obeyed by the palatines and the principal Polish gentlemen; and within a fortnight after the battle, but 400 soldiers of that nation remained with Dmitri. Feeling that nothing but a daring stroke could save him from destruction, and that hesitation would be death, he abandoned the siege of Novgorod; and after refreshing his troops by a few days' rest, again took the field with a force which, in consequence of the Russians who had joined him, still amounted to about 15,000 men.

Prince Mstislavski was disabled by his wounds from resuming the command of the czar's army. Basmanof was summoned by Boris to Moscow to receive the honour he had won by his bravery, and the royal troops were committed to the direction of Vassili Schuisky, who, though brave, did not possess those other and more important qualities which aid in forming an accomplished general. On the 20th of January, 1605, the czar's forces, amounting to 70,000 men, were drawn up on the plain of Dobrynitchi. Dmitri, with his army of only 15,000 men, did not hesitate to attack them. Having addressed his troops and prayed aloud before them, he, with one division of his army, gallantly charged the centre of the enemy. He was received with a fire from fourteen cannons and 16,000 muskets, which might have done terrible execution had it not been hurried and ill-directed. As it was, it proved almost harmless, and a few moments afterwards Dmitri's horse had broken the line of their opponents. Once again victory might have favoured the pretender but for the cowardice, or more probably treachery, of 8,000 mounted Zaporogues, who formed the main body of his army. Instead of seconding their brave young leader, these men stood still until the troops of Boris were enabled to rally, and then wheeling round, they quitted the field without striking a blow. It is said that they were bribed by Boris; but whatever was the cause of their misconduct, its result was the defeat of their companions. Dmitri perceived that the day was irredeemably lost: his Cossack infantry, numbering 4,000 men, withstood for a time the whole Russian army, and perished on the field to a man. The scanty remnant of Dmitri's army took to a flight in which he was compelled to



join. It is said, that they might have been all put to the sword, but that Schuisky and his officers, though they fought on the side of the czar, had no intention of altogether removing a man through whom they could keep Boris in a state of constant agitation and necessity for their services. For this reason, they gave orders to check the pursuit, saying, "The fowl is in the pot"—a familiar phrase by which the soldiers understood that Dmitri was either slain or taken prisoner.

The pretender had no longer an army. He and the miserable remnant of his followers fled to a town named Putivle, near the frontiers, which, on account of its strong defences, offered an asylum he deemed tolerably secure. Schuisky, instead of attempting to secure his person, remained at Dobrynitchi, where he occupied himself with hanging or shooting the prisoners he had taken. Then, after several subterfuges for avoiding action, he placed his troops in winter quarters, and sent word to the czar that no more could be done that season.

Boris, delighted with the recent victory, expected a very different result. He expressed his displeasure in so severe a manner as altogether to alienate from him many of those officers who had before been lukewarm in his service. Animosity to the czar naturally engendered a favourable feeling towards his opponent; which only needed some return of good fortune to Dmitri to induce the disaffected to desert to him. Though stimulated by the reproaches of the czar to some further exertions, such as besieging the town of Kroury, which had declared for Dmitri, Schuisky merely deceived his master by idle efforts, which had not, and were not intended to have, any result. Dmitri, who remained unmolested, still preserved an undaunted spirit and a hopeful mind. He made use of the time which the delays of Schuisky created for him, by sending manifestos and letters throughout the country. He had many agents also at work in the army of the czar; and the result was soon seen in the desertion to him not only of many common soldiers, but also of some persons of rank. The alarmed Boris again attempted to accomplish by stratagem that which he could not effect by the open hand of power. He sent three monks to the town of Putivle with letters from himself and the patriarch, offering to the townspeople a full pardon, and a magnificent reward, if they would give

up the impostor to him alive or dead. The inhabitants disdained the bribe, and, arresting the monks, put them to the torture. One of them then confessed that he carried about him a subtle poison, which was to be administered to the supposed czarevitch by two boyards, who had insinuated themselves into his confidence for that purpose. The monks were put to death; and the exposure of the attempt of Boris on the life of his rival, did much mischief to the cause of the former. Dmitri turned it to advantage by writing a haughty letter both to the patriarch and the czar. He reproached them with the dastardly and criminal means to which they had resorted, and boasted of the especial protection of Divine Providence. With a calm audacity, he told Boris that he was disposed to act mercifully towards him. "Let him," he said, "descend from the throne he has usurped, and seek in the solitude of the cloisters to reconcile himself with heaven; in that case I will forget his crimes, and even assure him of my sovereign protection."

The arrogance of Dmitri was extremely politic. To a populace who were daily becoming more impressed that his claim was a just one, his haughty language seemed but natural to a person of such distinguished birth. At this period all things seemed to favour him, and to frown darkly upon the fortunes of the troubled czar. The northern lights having appeared with unusual brilliancy, and a comet being visible, the superstition of the people interpreted these events into a mystic indication of the ruin of the czar. Others went further, and believed that these appearances were signs of the anger of God, and warnings to them to come forward in support of their rightful sovereign; and that, unless they abandoned the usurper who had attempted the life of the last descendant of the royal race, the phials of the divine wrath would be poured out upon the country. In consequence of the prevalence of this feeling, Dmitri received so many offers of allegiance, that he was soon at the head of a very formidable party.

Boris appears to have been quite unnerved at the progress of the defection, and it is very probable that he was now the victim of great mental excitement, if not disease. It is said that sometimes, during periods of despondency or terror, he fancied that the forces of the pretender were led by the disinterred skeleton of the murdered



prince. Surrounded, as usual, by a court reputed for its splendour, and directing as hitherto the councils of the nation, yet he knew that he was environed by hypocrites and traitors. He was still the autocrat; but he knew that amongst his courtiers were some who feared his fall, and others who secretly rejoiced at the probability of such an event.

Such was the aspect of affairs when the Russian people were startled by the news of the sudden death of the czar! This unexpected event took place on the 13th of April, 1605. Boris had that day risen apparently in his usual state of health, which, though seriously impaired, was not such as to excite alarm of immediate danger. He had presided, according to custom, at the council-board, and afterwards dined with some distinguished foreigners who had been presented to him. Before leaving the dining apartment, he was seized with sudden sickness, and effusions of blood from his nose, ears, and mouth. Every assistance was rendered, but he sank slowly into a state of insensibility, and expired within two hours. Before he became unconscious, he desired to enter the church as a monk, and was accordingly consecrated by the name of Bogolep, which means, agreeable to God. Thus, after a reign of six years, died one of the most remarkable rulers of Russia, in the fifty-third year of his age. His death was generally attributed to poison administered by his own hand; and some writers affirm, without any qualification, that such was the fact. Such an end to the life of a man who had won his path to power by hypocrisy and murder, seems so poetically just, that many will not wish to sift its accuracy. But however we may feel on such points, experience instructs us differently. The great criminals of the world too often escape the doom to which a moral justice would condemn them; and the faith of the weak is vexed by events in which they strive in vain to discern the invisible hand of Deity. Perhaps Boris, the murderer and tyrant, did commit suicide in a paroxysm of despair, in which case popular belief would be confirmed, and moral justice vindicated. But the circumstances of his death are perfectly consistent with natural dissolution. It might have arisen from apoplexy, or from the bursting of a large blood-vessel; either of which events would have been promoted by the long nervous excitement which the czar had en-

dured. Certainly there are difficulties in the way of a belief that he was the voluntary cause of his own death. It has been well reasoned, "That so long as the czar lived, and the army had not actually revolted, the pretender's aspiring fortunes were not secured from all chance of failure. The existence of Boris was the only safeguard of his family. Would so cool a calculator have thrown away a chance however faint? Would a man of such energy and resolution, so noted for the depth and tenderness of his domestic affections, have wilfully hastened the triumph of his foe, and abandoned his wife and children to inevitable destruction—to destruction only rendered inevitable by his own act?" To this it may be replied, that if Boris suffered from sickness, despair, and partial insanity, he would be unable to reason upon his misfortunes, or to feel for the position of those dependent upon him. Despair excludes with clouds of impenetrable gloom all but one, and that the most painful, view of a case; while insanity is incapable of reasoning upon it.

But to whatever circumstance we must attribute the death of the czar Boris Godunof, or however sternly we may denounce his many crimes, it must be admitted that he was a sovereign of remarkable abilities. Russia prospered under his administration when the simple Feodor sat in the seat of the czar; and Boris, during the early part of his own reign, acted in many matters like the father of his people. His strong arm swept back the Tartars; his acute sense encouraged a civilisation which might have produced brilliant results but for the barbarous opposition of the priesthood; and benevolence, or policy, induced him to pour out his mighty hordes of wealth at the feet of the people, to avert the horrors of famine. Such was his administrative ability and mental vigour during the early part of his reign, that he has even been compared with his illustrious successor, Peter the Great. He was assuredly a murderer and a tyrant; but he was no common criminal. His early crimes arose from a dazzling ambition, and his later ones from a constantly oppressive sense of insecurity. Such are the evils of usurpation. Had he been a legitimate sovereign, he would have proved not only a wise one, but most probably have descended to his grave in honour, and left an unsullied reputation for the contemplation of a sad yet grateful people.



The death of Boris was so sudden, that Dmitri was not prepared to take instant advantage of it. A hurried council of the principal nobility took place at Moscow, at which it was decided that Feodor, the son of the late czar, should succeed him on the throne. Feodor, who was but sixteen or eighteen years old, was proclaimed without opposition. General Basmanof was appointed to the command of the army, which, notwithstanding its disaffection, passively took an oath of fidelity to the new czar.

His day of power was but a brief one. Basmanof proved false, and opened a secret correspondence with Dmitri, which he shortly afterwards followed up by publicly declaring for him, and proclaiming the adventurer as czar of Moscow. Most of the troops received the proclamation with enthusiasm, and the rest were overawed by superior numbers. On the 8th of May, Prince Galitzin presented himself at Putivle, to tender to Dmitri the submission of the army. The pretender received him with great affability, and sent a command to Basmanof to prepare to march to Moscow. Dmitri also dispatched envoys to the capital, who, backed by a number of the boyards and wealthy merchants, assembled the people in the grand square, and called upon them to acknowledge and proclaim their lawful sovereign. The people were ripe for the desired change; and with vociferous shouts they declared for Dmitri. Thoroughly excited, they then hurried to the Kremlin, which they forced, and bursting into the royal apartments, seized Feodor, his sister Xenia, and his mother, and placed them as prisoners in the house which Boris had occupied before he ascended the throne. The other distinguished members of the Godunof family were put in chains, and sent to the camp of Dmitri.

The latter had now almost attained the summit of his wild ambition: he had but to advance and seize the crown, for which he had played so boldly. The princes Galitzin and Massalski preceded him to the capital as his plenipotentiaries. There they arrested the patriarch who, in the time of Boris, had anathematised Dmitri as a rebel and "rascally monk." The time-serving old priest now professed his willingness to crown the man whom he had formerly denounced; but this suppleness did not save him from deprivation and imprisonment. For deposed princes there is

but a step between the prison and the grave, and the unfortunate Feodor and his mother soon ceased to live. It was reported that they had destroyed themselves by poison; but a chronicler of the time stated, that when their bodies were exposed in public, he himself saw on their necks the livid marks of the cords with which they had been strangled. The murder was generally attributed to the commands of Dmitri; but doubts are entertained on that point. "The zeal of his agents," says Mérimée, "doubtless had no need of positive instructions. The sequel of this young adventurer's history shows that, far from being cruel, he was goodnatured and generous to a degree which was very rare in those days, even among the most civilised nations. I am more inclined to believe that men who, within a month, had taken two oaths, and successively betrayed Boris and Feodor, eagerly seized, without orders, the opportunity to remove enemies out of their new master's way, and objects of remorse out of their own." Indeed, the blood of but one other person was shed in the accomplishment of this remarkable revolution. Semen, the head of the secret police under Boris, was put to death, apparently more from the general odium he had incurred, than from any vindictive feeling on the part of the new czar.

Dmitri behaved with a princely composure, and avoided any undignified haste in grasping the sceptre which fortune had laid at his feet. At length he complied with the entreaties of his subjects; and on the 20th of June, 1605, he entered Moscow in great state, amidst the enthusiastic congratulations of enormous throngs of people. No heir of the house of Ruric had ever been received by his subjects with such demonstrations of affection. Yet even in this hour of triumph, there were to be discerned slight indications of that popular fickleness, the bitter cup of which the new sovereign was to drain to the dregs. As the procession crossed the great square before the Kremlin, a sudden whirlwind arose, which almost deprived the horsemen of their seats, and hid the czar and his *cortége* for a short time from the spectators, beneath clouds of dust. This natural event was regarded by the superstitious people as an omen of evil; and, making the sign of the cross, they whispered to each other, "God keep us from harm." Other incidents occurred which the fickle Muscovites beheld with



displeasure. The new czar was attended by a large body of Poles, who, at the moment he dismounted from his horse to kiss the relics with which the clergy advanced to meet him, struck up a flourish of military music, which drowned the chaunt of the *Te Deum*. The Poles, or "Pagans," as the Russians contemptuously called all foreigners who were not of the Greek church, entered the cathedral with him—a circumstance which was regarded as a profanation. Afterwards, Dmitri knelt in tears before the tomb of Ivan, and kissing it in a well-affected transport, exclaimed, "O father! thy orphan reigns; and this he owes to thy holy prayers!" At this sight the spectators were affected with a contagious emotion, and, weeping with him, exclaimed, "He is indeed the son of the Terrible."

Notwithstanding the natural doubts entertained by many of his subjects, and their superstitious regard to omens, the reign of the new sovereign began auspiciously. The nobles rejoiced that Boris was no more; and the people, that events promised a return of tranquillity. Dmitri's manners were courteous and attractive—a circumstance which won for him the attachment of those who approached him. He was also extremely generous, and conferred with a profuse hand benefits upon all who had helped him to the throne, and sometimes even upon those who had been his enemies. With a liberality approaching to wantonness, he doubled the pay of the army, and the salaries of all public functionaries. He also created some sensation by an announcement that he would pay all the debts contracted by his father the czar, Ivan IV. Corrupt judges he punished with severity; and sternly admonished others in whose decisions he detected any partiality. In order to insure a better administration of justice, he adopted the Eastern practice of sitting, twice a-week, in the portico of his palace, for the purpose of receiving the petitions of the poorest of his subjects, and redressing their grievances. He also accomplished many important reforms; remitted many taxes which had previously fettered commerce and made justice unattainable by the needy; and modified the unjust enactment of Boris, which converted the peasantry into serfs. The noble was authorised to reclaim his fugitive serf, but restrained, under severe penalties, from fraudulent claims of ownership. All serfs, also, who had been abandoned by their lords

during the late famine, were enfranchised, upon the principle that the master's right of property was inseparable from the serf's right of maintenance. Where freemen, who had hired out their services for a period only, were retained as serfs against their will, Dmitri visited the oppressor with a severe punishment. Proceedings of this nature induced the people to anticipate that his reign would be a period of prosperity for the empire. His supporters, also, were highly gratified; for he had shown himself, in no small degree, a brave and skilful soldier in the field, and an efficient statesman at the council table.

The new czar had yet to pass through one remarkable trial before his presumed identity with the murdered son of Ivan could be said to be confirmed. The mother of the true Dmitri was yet living in the convent to which Boris had compelled her to retire. If she acknowledged him as her son, it was naturally assumed that even the most sceptical would be satisfied. A month elapsed after the entrance of Dmitri into Moscow before the interview took place—a circumstance that created some remark. A meeting with the lady before she had been prepared and won over to countenance the deception, would have been fatal to his claims. Her own brother, however, undertook the delicate task of eradicating any scruples she might entertain against a compliance with what was required of her. It was pretty certain what course a woman, of no great strength of mind or loftiness of principle, would take in such a matter. If she refused to acknowledge the czar as her son, her life was in danger; if she consented, she exchanged a position of obscurity for one of distinction and brilliancy.

At length the widow of Ivan left her convent at Vyska, and proceeded to Toininsk, where she was to meet her supposed son. Dmitri started from Moscow with a numerous and magnificent retinue, and was followed by multitudes of people anxious to behold the result. The first interview took place in a sumptuous tent erected for the occasion. Dmitri and the widow of Ivan each entered alone; for it was cunningly assumed that the first emotions, at such a meeting, were too tender and sacred to be beheld by common eyes. A brief time elapsed; and then, emerging from the tent, they threw themselves into each other's arms with every appearance of intense affection. The multitude shouted with joy: they



were now thoroughly convinced that Dmitri was the true son of Ivan the Terrible. He then escorted the princess to Moscow with the profoundest respect, walking during part of the distance bare-headed by the side of her carriage. On their arrival, he conducted her to the convent of St. Cyril, in the Kremlin, where she was to reside until he should have built a magnificent convent expressly for her. He also assigned her a revenue and household suitable to her rank, visited her every day, consulted her on affairs of state, and even associated her name with his own in the ukases he issued. The coronation of Dmitri followed her arrival, on which occasion the favour shown by him to the Poles again excited the jealousies of his subjects.

It was necessary, at least in the commencement of his reign, for the new czar to be more circumspect than other monarchs. Unfortunately for the permanence of his sway, he was less so. It has frequently been observed, that perhaps no man can effectually fulfil the duties of a ruler, unless his education has been directed into that channel. The habits of private life, of unrestrained intercourse, and of commonplace associations, form an incompetent preparation for the novelty of a station which admits of no equality, and is removed from the sympathies and influences affecting the rest of mankind. The new czar had been intoxicated with the splendour of his fortune and the rapidity of his success. This, combined with his intrepid spirit and a superstitious confidence in his destiny, rendered him indifferent, if not averse, to the counsels of prudence. The Russian people were then, as now, animated by a powerful feeling of nationality, which is usually attended with a contempt or dislike for the inhabitants of other countries. Prudence required that the new czar should be, or affect to be, eminently national in his habits and predilections. So far from this being the case, his subjects soon began to perceive, with uneasiness, that their sovereign was influenced by foreign notions; that he surrounded himself with Polish guards, preferred them to all offices of importance, and laughed at many of the customs of his people, which he deemed uncouth, and even barbarous. In the council-chamber he astonished the Russian nobles by his superior knowledge and capacity, and offended them by his sarcastic observations and his preference of foreigners. "Go and travel," said

he to the boyards; "observe the ways of civilised nations; for you are no better than savages." The very truth of this and similar remarks, made them the more bitter and less easy to be forgiven. The marked preference Dmitri gave to the Poles, had the effect not only of making the Russians discontented, but also of encouraging the haughtiness and insolence of the former. His private secretaries were Poles; while the only Russian on whom he bestowed his confidence was General Basmanof, a man not liked by the nobles of his nation.

This imprudence on the part of the czar revived the controversy, which had never altogether slept, concerning the questioned royalty of Dmitri's birth. The assumed proofs of his royal origin had never been examined by any competent tribunal. They were accepted, without examination, during the wild tumult of revolt; and as important evidence of the fact of the murder of the young prince was still extant, very little persuasion was requisite to induce the people to adopt any opinion in accordance with their political bias. Latent doubts were called into activity by Dmitri's neglect of the national prejudices. These, once encouraged, were carried to an absurd extent. Even his mode of riding was quoted to show that he was not of royal blood. He delighted to leap, without help, upon the back of a wild stallion, and ride the animal furiously like a Cossack; while the czars, in imitation of oriental custom, were in the habit of being lifted into the saddle, and riding with slowness and gravity. Other insignificant matters in the personal habits of the czar were cited in disproof of the distinguished origin to which he laid claim. He frequently passed the images of saints without saluting them; he ate veal (which was considered an unclean meat), dined without having his table blessed and sprinkled with holy water, and even so far neglected pious conventionalities, as to rise from it without washing his hands. Then he never slept after dinner, according to Russian custom, but selected that period for walking about the city, alone or with one companion, greatly to the astonishment of the people, who, being accustomed only to see their sovereigns when surrounded by a pompous equipage, not unnaturally considered such conduct undignified, and indicative of a humble origin. In addressing the clergy, it was noticed that he spoke of "*your* religion," and "*your* ritual;" which gave a



further colour to the suspicion that he had adopted the religion of the church of Rome. One day, during a sitting of his ministers, he was told that something he had just proposed was prohibited by the seventh general council of the church. He replied—"Well, what matter? very likely it is allowed by the eighth." This flippant response, which, at the worst, was but an unbecoming levity, was condemned by the clergy as an abominable blasphemy.

The circumstance, however, which most excited the nationality and anger of the Russians, was the approaching marriage of the czar with Marina Mniszek, the daughter of the Palatine Sandomir. "Could it be possible," said they, "that a heretic woman, an unbaptized Pole, was to be raised to the throne of orthodox Russia?" Such was the state of public feeling when Dmitri ventured upon an expedient which led to his ruin. Ambitious by nature, he aspired to the glory of conquest: he contemplated, by a combination of the Polish and Russian forces, to reduce to insignificance those aggressive and insolent powers the Turks and Tartars. The enterprise would be glorious, but it presented numerous difficulties, some of which were of a kind to be encountered rather by the statesman than by the warrior. It was necessary to conciliate the King of Poland, whose assistance he desired; and to amuse the pope, against whose decision that monarch would not enter into the scheme. The vastness of the military preparations, also, were such, that the resources of the Kremlin were found to be altogether inadequate to the expense. Here was the point which led the inconsiderate czar to his doom. He reasoned, that it was the duty of the clergy to bear part of the cost of an expedition to be undertaken for the glory and triumph of Christianity. He therefore demanded an exact account of the revenues of the numerous monasteries throughout the empire, and bluntly affirmed that he would not suffer so many monks to live in idleness, when a part of Christendom was to be delivered from Mussulman bondage. Reform in this direction was needful, but not judicious at the time. Dmitri, however, went beyond reform, and proceeded to confiscation, which was manifestly unjust. With arbitrary severity he suppressed several monasteries, and seized the wealth belonging to them. The rest of the priesthood lived in fear of a similar proceeding towards their religious houses, and a clerical con-

spiracy was soon formed against him. Ségur observes—"His other offences and irregularities might have been endured; the enmity of other classes he might have assuaged or curbed; but when he laid his sacrilegious hand upon the ark of the Lord, that is to say, upon the coffers of the clergy, he raised up against himself legions of implacable foes, whose malice baffled resistance, for they fought with the impalpable but deadly weapons of calumny and superstition. The priests and monks became the industrious propagators of every false or exaggerated rumour that could poison the minds of the people against the czar. They compared him to Julian the Apostate; and all the truly royal qualities, which they could not but recognise in Dmitri, they turned to his vilification, as so many points of resemblance to the persecutor of the Christians."

The clergy promoted a conspiracy against the czar, which many of the boyards readily joined. They had assisted his cause, without caring whether or not he was the son of Ivan. All they wanted was some one whom they could set up against Boris. It was their intention to make a puppet of the new czar, and to grasp the reality, while he held the shadow, of regal authority. In this they were disappointed. Dmitri had far too much intelligence to be made a tool of; and they found that, notwithstanding the general mildness of his nature, he could be quite as absolute as ever Boris was.

Prince Schuisky was the principal of the conspirators; for, as the nearest collateral heir of the Rurics, he looked forward to obtaining the crown for himself, in the event of the deposition or death of Dmitri. Schuisky advised the delay of the execution of the plot until the arrival of the intended czarina from Poland—a circumstance which led to its detection, and the arrest of himself and his two brothers. The latter were condemned to be banished to Siberia, and the former to death. They were, however, all subsequently pardoned—Schuisky himself, at the very moment when, having knelt upon the scaffold, the axe was uplifted over him. The traitor then behaved with so much humility as to disarm the suspicions of Dmitri; but his danger had only made him the more cautious; and, in reality, he directed the proceedings of the malcontents with as much authority as ever. To those who advised the generous czar not to spare a convicted traitor, his reply was—"I have



sworn not to shed Christian blood, and I will keep my oath. There are two ways of governing an empire—tyranny and generosity. I choose the latter. I will not be a tyrant. I will not spare money; I will scatter it on all hands.”

Before the arrival of Marina from Poland, a new pretender to the throne made his appearance among the Cossacks of the Volga; and, assuming the name of Peter Feodorovitch, represented himself to be the son of the czar Feodor and his consort Irene. The clumsy tale he told was, that immediately after birth he had been taken from his mother, and placed with some Cossacks; while the female infant, which had been substituted at the command of Boris, died in its cradle. This statement found Cossacks simple enough to believe it; and a few thousand of them, having proclaimed Feodorovitch as the lawful czarevitch, abandoned themselves to the congenial occupation of plundering. Dmitri acted with a dignity befitting his presumed rank: he addressed a letter to the new pretender, saying, that if he would come to Moscow and prove his parentage, he should receive a pension suitable to his high birth; but that, if he knew himself to be an impostor, he had better retire at once, while he might do so with safety. The hint was taken, and Feodorovitch and his followers disappeared for the time among the barren wilds of the steppes.

Notwithstanding the impatience of the czar for the arrival of his bride, to whom he appears to have been sincerely attached, the nuptial journey, from Cracow to Moscow, was conducted with so much pomp and ceremony, that it extended over a period of three months. It was not until the 12th of May, 1606, that she made her public entry into the Russian capital. So numerous was her retinue, that the offended people compared it to an invading army; and such was the haughty bearing of the Poles, that they rather gave themselves the airs of victors than assumed the courteous bearing of guests. Consequently, amidst all the external demonstrations of loyalty and gladness, there was a deeply-seated and widely-spreading spirit of discontent. “Is it the custom in your country,” said the jealous Muscovites to their armed and uninvited guests, “to go to a wedding cased in steel, as if you were going to a battle?” The feelings of the citizens grew more bitter when they beheld the Poles, who had come

with the expectation of a campaign against the Tartars, unloading whole arsenals from their waggons. The conspirators turned this uneasiness to account. Mingling with the people, they spread a report that the czar had sent for the Polish allies for the purpose of massacring the orthodox Christians, and, by this terrible exhibition of his power, seat himself more firmly on the throne. The idle calumny was believed; a general though suppressed hatred to Dmitri followed; and even the grim passiveness of the people indicated the coming storm. A less unreasonable, though equally unfounded report was, that the real object of the Polish ambassadors who came in the equipage of the elect czarina, was to receive from the czar the cession of a considerable portion of Russian territory.

During the week that elapsed between the arrival of Marina and her marriage, her conduct was not of a kind to conciliate those among whom she had come to dwell. Though lodged in the convent occupied by the dowager-czarina, she could not, even for so brief a period, behave with the decorum which was considered due to the character of the place. She pettishly complained of the tiresome babble of the Greek priests, and the long litanies of the nuns. She induced the czar to bring her musicians, and the convent was profaned with concerts, balls, and masquerades. She would not even place any restraint upon her most frivolous caprices; and in this temper, insisted on having a set of Polish cooks instead of the Russian ones, as she protested she could not eat the food prepared by the latter. These circumstances were soon spread abroad, and added considerably to her unpopularity. Even so comparatively unimportant a thing as the rejection of the Russian cooks was converted into a religious question; and the offended people said, that the czar and his betrothed had brought in pagan cooks, that they might break the commands of the orthodox church with respect to forbidden meats and fast days. She also insisted in being married and crowned in a Polish dress, though no czarina ever went through those ceremonies except in the national costume, consisting of a head-dress, called *kokoshnik*, a gown hanging straight down from above the bosom, and boots with great iron-shod heels. Marina declared that she would never consent to be made such a fright of; but the affair was taken up so seriously, that it was brought



before the council for their decision. This was against the petulant girl, who was thus compelled to conform to the national usages for a single day.

The marriage and coronation took place on the 18th of May; but the czarina did not abjure the Romish form of Christianity, or the Latin heresy, as the Russians termed it, as they had fully expected her to do. The Poles, who were admitted into the cathedral on the occasion, excited great scandal by the levity of their behaviour. Some sat on tombs that contained revered relics, others laughed and talked aloud, and derided the ceremonies of the Greek church. Their intercourse with the Russians was altogether marked by great insolence and barbarity of manners. "It is we," said they to the citizens, "who have given you a czar." During the festivals that followed the marriage, the Poles often, while in a state of intoxication, drew their swords upon peaceful persons in the streets, and behaved with disgusting effrontery to their wives and daughters. Even the wives of the boyards suffered insults from them, and, on some occasions, were actually pursued to the doors of their husbands.

The chief conspirator, Schuisky, rightly conjectured that the fitting time for the execution of his villany had arrived. Secret meetings were held at his house, and immediate action resolved upon. Agents were chosen to go about among the people, and declare Dmitri an impostor and a heretic, and that the indiscriminate massacre of the people, to which we have alluded, was to take place on the 27th of the month. One fellow was arrested while spreading these reports; but his examination took place before some of the boyards who were in the conspiracy, and they informed the czar that the language of the prisoner was the incoherent raving of a drunkard. The unsuspecting czar believed a report which corresponded with his own impressions. He believed that his troops were attached to him, and that he was perfectly secure against any attempts to shake his power. Even the warnings of General Basmanof and the Polish officers were utterly disregarded by him. So far from deeming that danger was near, he seemed to think himself eminently secure. "I hold Moscow and the empire in my hand," he remarked, "and nothing shall be done in it but my will."

The insurrection began during the night

of the 28th of May, only ten days after the ill-fated marriage which had drawn down on Dmitri his ruin. At daybreak on the following morning the whole city was in a savage tumult. In the great square, Prince Schuisky and a number of boyards were assembled on horseback, and arrayed in armour. The people, still further inflamed by the monks who mingled with them, were assembling in vast numbers, and, with barbarous shouts and cries, preparing to storm the Kremlin. Violence in this direction was needless; the guards within had been tampered with, and at a signal from Schuisky, one of the gates was thrown open. The armed boyards and their followers entered, followed by countless throngs of the people, bearing axes and clubs.

Rebellion, to be successful, must ever be associated with religion. In this case, the Russian prelates were among its chief instigators. The crafty Schuisky, however, resolved to avail himself of every advantage that might be derived by throwing the veil of religion over a deed which, in him at least, was selfish and criminal. Proceeding to the church of the Assumption, he leapt from his horse, and falling on his knees before an image of one of the saints, appeared for a few moments as if absorbed in prayer. Then rising suddenly, as if inspired, he brandished his sword with one hand, while he grasped the crucifix with the other, and shouted aloud, "Orthodox Christians, death to the heretic!" The shout was re-echoed by the people, accompanied by furious yells and discordant shouts of execration. At the same time the great bell of Moscow rung out a solemn note of alarm, which was responded to by all the church bells of the city.

At this signal, the people yet in the streets began to break into the houses of the Poles, and to massacre the inhabitants as they started from sleep in alarm. The czar, who was aroused by the sound of the bells, inquired the cause of the confusion. It happened that one of the conspirators was on duty at the palace, and he replied to his unsuspecting master, that a great fire had broken out in the city; and then hurried off to join his comrades. But the increasing uproar soon convinced Dmitri that something more serious than a fire had taken place. Having hastily dressed himself, he sent General Basmanof to ascertain the actual state of affairs. The latter beheld the outer court filled with an armed



and furious mob, who constantly yelled out "Death to the impostor! death to the heretic!" Commanding the halberdiers to stand to their arms, the faithful soldier hurried back to his prince. He was followed by one audacious conspirator into the apartment of the czar. "Well! unlucky emperor," exclaimed the fellow, "at last thou art awake. Come and give an account of thyself to the people of Moscow." Basmanof cleft the skull of the insolent ruffian; and then he and the czar prepared to cut their way through the rebels who were assembled around the peristyle of the palace. Dmitri slew several who assailed him, and appealed to others who had formerly been his adherents. Basmanof also vainly attempted to recall the conspirators to a sense of their duty. While thus engaged, one whom he had recently saved from banishment stabbed him to the heart, exclaiming, as he did so, "Go to hell, villain, with thy czar."

Dmitri and his guards were compelled to retire into the interior of the palace, where they barricaded themselves in chamber after chamber, as the latter successively yielded to the violence of the insurgents. When the last apartment was forced, and the guards compelled to surrender, it was discovered that the czar had escaped. The unfortunate man, hunted like a wolf, and seeing the hopelessness of resistance to the overwhelming multitudes of his howling pursuers, laid down his sword, and leaped from the window of a room in a retired part of the palace. It was thirty feet to the ground, and in the fall he broke his leg. No one was near; but the groans which agony elicited from Dmitri brought some soldiers to the spot. These men, who were not in the conspiracy, on recognising the czar, swore that they would defend him with their lives. The rebels soon found out the retreat of the miserable prince, and thronged tumultuously to the spot. They induced the guards to lay down their arms by a threat of slaughtering their wives and children unless they did so. Dmitri was then dragged back into the palace, which by this time had been sacked by the mob. His captors having torn off his royal garments, insultingly placed upon him the dress of a menial, and brought him before the assembled chief conspirators, to undergo the mockery of a trial. But the brutal impatience of these men defeated their object, and shortened the agony of

their victim. "Bastard dog," said one of their number, "tell us who thou art, and whence thou art come?" Collecting his strength, the persecuted man replied, "You all know that I am your czar, the legitimate son of Ivan Vassilovitch. Ask my mother. If you desire my death, give me time at least to collect my senses." On this, one of the number, by rank a Russian gentleman, named Valuief, exclaimed passionately, "What is the use of so much talk with the heretic dog? This is the way I confess this Polish fifer!" As he thus spoke, the traitor shot Dmitri through the breast, and laid him a corpse upon the floor.

Not satisfied with this savage act, the conspirators abandoned the body to the mob, who exhibited their barbarous fury by hacking it with axes and sabres. Then rolling it down the palace steps, they threw it contemptuously upon that of his faithful general Basmanof. "You were friends in life," shouted the ruffians, in their savage exultation; "go along to hell together." The frenzy of the mob was not yet satisfied. Eventually, they carried the bodies to the place of execution, and exposed them upon a table. There one man placed a set of bagpipes on the breast of the murdered czar, and thrust the pipe into the mouth of the corpse, remarking, "You played upon us long enough; now play for us." Other brutes lashed the mangled body with their whips; while the women, in the exhibition of a frantic fury, even went beyond the obscene ferocity of the men.

The murder of Dmitri was followed by a frightful massacre of the Poles, who, wherever they were met, were slaughtered on the spot. Polish priests, musicians, domestics, and other defenceless persons, were murdered without mercy; but the nobles and their armed adherents barricaded themselves within their strong-built houses, and repelled their assailants with volleys of musketry. About mid-day the confusion abated, and Prince Schuisky and the chief boyards of the council rode through the streets, attended by a body of troops, and pacified the people. They also promised the Poles that their lives and property should be respected, provided they would remain within their houses until the popular excitement had subsided. Amongst those who escaped the slaughter was she whose wanton caprices had partly occasioned it. Marina, whose marriage festivities had terminated so tragically, eluded



the fury of the mob, who would probably have torn her limb from limb. When the insurgents first burst into the palace, she ran, in her night-dress only, to hide in the cellars. Unable to reach them on account of the mob, who fortunately did not recognise her, she returned to her own apartments. There she was for a time concealed by the grand-mistress of the palace, beneath the wide-hooped skirts of her dress, while the door was defended by a Polish chamberlain, sabre in hand. The door was at length shattered by a volley of musketry, which killed the Pole and one of the ladies of the czarina's suite. The ruffians then poured in and gratified their brutal appetites by subjecting the trembling women to the most insulting violence. Some of the chief conspirators entering the chamber, drove out the savages, and having detected Marina, placed her in secure custody.

The mangled body of Dmitri was exposed for three days, in the place of execution, to the gaze of the people. This was done that, at least, no doubt might exist as to his death. But the disgusting fury of the assassins had defeated their purpose. The corpse, bruised, mangled, and misshapen, covered with blood and dirt, bore but little resemblance to humanity. Certainly, no one could recognise in that shocking mass the handsome young man who, but a few

days before, had been seen glittering with gold and jewels, and wearing on his open brow the imperial crown. As the disfigured features could not be identified, conjecture was speedily at work; and some of the people suggested that Dmitri had again escaped, and that some one else had fallen a victim by mistake. Some persons even said that the dead man had a beard; while it was well known that Dmitri had none. On the third night a blue flame was observed playing over the body, and this natural result of putrefaction inspired the people with a feeling of superstitious terror. The corpse was therefore buried in a cemetery beyond the city walls. As a hurricane blew when Dmitri entered Moscow, so another followed his mangled corpse out of it. It was reported that supernatural events followed even after the body had been placed in the grave; and the affrighted people whispered to each other, that the dead Dmitri was a vampire, or one of those wizards who, by means of hell-born arts, can rise at intervals from the grave, and resume the functions of life. This wild superstition was so generally believed, that the authorities caused the body to be exhumed and burnt. The ashes were then collected, mixed with gunpowder, rammed into a cannon, and fired down the road leading to Poland.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

PRINCE SCHUISKY IS PROCLAIMED CZAR; IT IS RUMOURED THAT DMITRI IS ALIVE; INSURRECTION IN HIS FAVOUR; SIEGE OF TOULA; APPEARANCE OF A SECOND FALSE DMITRI; MARINA ASSERTS HIM TO BE HER HUSBAND; THE KING OF POLAND INVADERS RUSSIA, AND LAYS SIEGE TO SMOLENSK; SCHUISKY IS DEPOSED; MURDER OF THE PRETENDER DMITRI; AN INTERREGNUM; THE POLES COMPELLED TO ABANDON RUSSIA.

WE now approach a period of anarchy and national danger. Russia was to pass through one of those fiery ordeals in which nations are sometimes extinguished; while at others they emerge from them endued with a renewed strength and a better life. The overjoyed Muscovites neglected to proceed at once to the election of a new sovereign: for several days they were entirely occupied in celebrating their brutal triumph. The ambitious Prince Schuisky then directed his adherents to proclaim him as the czar—a

result with which bribes and intimidations induced the council to comply. Immediately upon his assumption of the regal authority, Schuisky took an oath not to punish any one without the advice and consent of the boyards; not to visit the offences of the fathers on the children; and never to revenge himself in any way on those who had offended him during preceding reigns. Dreading the anger of the Poles, Schuisky also sent an ambassador to Sigismund III., with directions to represent the late czar as



an impostor, who had deceived both Poland and Russia. But Sigismund had determined to revenge the recent slaughter of his subjects at Moscow, and he would not even permit the ambassador to approach him.

By his irregular assumption of the crown, Schuisky had taken both the Russian people and nobles by surprise. He had never been popular with the latter, who now felt that they had merely been used as steps to enable him to ascend the throne. They felt that, had the people been allowed to elect a czar for themselves, they might have competed with him for that illustrious position. The new sovereign also, despite the oath he had taken, was unable to conceal his dislike to old opponents; and he showed that he was ready to become a tyrant as soon as he could assume a despotic bearing with safety. Like many other utterly worthless persons, Schuisky affected a great devotion to orthodox religion, and he made large promises to the clergy, by which means he obtained their support; but this did not balance the indifference, if not dislike, of the people, and the bitter animosity of the nobles. The latter actively disseminated their feelings of antipathy to the czar, which soon became almost universal throughout the country; and he who had been the chief of the late conspiracy, appeared likely to become the victim of a new one. So fleeting is popular favour, so rapid its reactionary power!

Credulity and ignorance are natural, and indeed inseparable, companions. In the unsettled state of society which now existed in Russia, the people were disposed to credit the wildest assertions, and the nobles to encourage any reports which threatened to endanger the throne of the czar, whom they hated and burned to depose. It might be supposed that the last had been heard of Dmitri, and that the memory of that unfortunate pretender was soon to be engulfed in oblivion. Had he survived the insurrection, it would be supposed that death would be the penalty of his making himself known. Such does not seem to be the case; for rumours that Dmitri was still living were received with avidity and satisfaction. Many denied that the mangled body exposed in the place of execution was that of the late czar, and affirmed it to be the corpse of an officer who had been accidentally murdered instead of him by mistake. Some swift horses were missed from the royal stable,

from whence they had no doubt been stolen by the mob; but it was supposed that Dmitri, by means of them, had escaped during the tumult of the insurrection. Three strangers in Russian attire, but speaking the Polish language, crossed the Oka in a boat; and one of them gave the ferryman six ducats, observing, as he did so, "You have ferried the czar; when he comes back to Moscow with a Polish army, he will not forget this service." Similar language was held by the same party at an inn in the direction of Putivle. It was eventually ascertained that one of them was Prince Shakhofskoi, who, upon the death of Dmitri, had, in anticipation of a revolution of popular feeling, immediately conceived the idea of finding a new impostor to personate the dead one—a device which might, perhaps, enable the prince to place a creature of his own upon the throne.

The incompetent Schuisky held the sceptre with so feeble a grasp, that the laws were openly violated, and confusion prevailed throughout the empire. The nobles, who regarded the new czar not only with feelings of anger and jealousy, but considered him also as a political trickster, pretended to believe the rumours concerning Dmitri, with the hope that they might yet be able to dethrone Schuisky, and set up some puppet in his stead, whom they would permit to reign until they had come to a better understanding amongst themselves.

The startled czar devised a plan which, he trusted, would at once silence these idle but dangerous reports. He had the grave of the real Prince Dmitri, at Uglitch, opened, and the body of the unfortunate boy removed to Moscow, and canonised by the patriarch. It was remarked that the corpse, though it had lain in the grave for fifteen years, was in a state of perfect preservation; that the hue of life was upon it; and that, in its hands, it held some nuts—an incident which seemed inconsistent with the received details of the boy's death. This circumstance eventually led to the no doubt calumnious report, that Schuisky had substituted the body of a newly-murdered boy for that of the decomposed Dmitri. For the present, however, it was reported that miracles were performed by the remains of the martyred prince; but these gross inventions took no root in the belief of the people, and were soon disregarded. Another proceeding of the czar would probably have had considerable effect, if his conduct had



not been such as to destroy his character for truth and honour. He obtained from the czarina (the widow of Ivan), a declaration that the impostor Gregory Otrepief, the late czar, had threatened to put her and all her family to death, unless she acknowledged him as her son; so that she had merely supported his false claims for the sake of saving her life. She was not believed; but it was assumed that she acted under intimidation rather on this occasion than on the former one.

A popular belief in the existence of Dmitri still existed, and an insurrection was actually got up in the cause of a phantom. Of this, Prince Shakhofskoi was the chief mover. He excited the inhabitants of Putivle to rise in arms; and, with the assistance of a body of Cossacks and peasants, successfully resisted the forces which Schuisky sent against them. Though this success wonderfully increased the numbers of the insurgents, still no czar Dmitri made his appearance to lead them. Notwithstanding this, one Ivan Bolotnikof arrived from Poland with a commission, bearing, he asserted, the imperial seal of Dmitri, and conferring on the bearer the command of the insurgent forces. This adventurer had been a serf, who had suffered imprisonment amongst the Turks, and, having escaped from them to Venice, had acquired some military knowledge in the service of the republic. His commission was recognised; he was installed in the command; and, shortly afterwards, twice defeated the forces of the incompetent czar. But the non-appearance of the supposed living Dmitri damped the ardour of the rebels, and many of them deserted from the visionary cause, which they began to feel they had too readily embraced. In consequence of this defection, Bolotnikof was defeated by Skopin Schuisky, the nephew of the czar, and compelled to take shelter in the fortress of Kaluga.

Prince Shakhofskoi appears to have been unable, during this period, to meet with any unprincipled person, suited by nature and education, to personate the murdered czar Dmitri. Under these circumstances, the impostor, who had taken the name of Peter Feodorovitch, and assumed to be the son of the czar Feodor and his consort Irene, made his appearance at Putivle, and offered himself to Shakhofskoi and the people as regent, during the absence of his uncle. Under other circumstances, the

audacious adventurer would probably have been put to death for his traitorous and insolent pretensions; but as the rebels were terribly in want of some colouring for their conduct, any royal name was acceptable. The offer was received, and the assumed czarevitch, Peter, welcomed with acclamations.

The czar Schuisky resolved to make a decisive effort to crush a rebellion which distracted the empire and poisoned his peace of mind. Collecting an army of 100,000 men, he took the field in person, and besieged the rebel chiefs in the strongly-fortified town of Toula, where they had taken refuge. The rebels, despairing of pardon if they were defeated, fought with a reckless fury which drove their assailants to a respectful distance, and prevented Schuisky from being able to take the place. The czar began to despair of success, when one day a priest, named Kravkof, presented himself before the council, and said he would communicate a plan which, if followed, would drown both the inhabitants and garrison of Toula. On being desired to explain himself, he called their attention to the fact that Toula is situated in a valley, and that the little river Cupa ran through the town. This river he ingeniously proposed to dam up below the town; and he pledged himself that, within a few hours after that operation, it would be under water. The scheme was adopted, and a bank of earth raised across the stream. The project, though partially successful, was not entirely so. An inundation which did much mischief was produced, but the water did not rise in the town to such a height as to destroy the lives of the inhabitants. Still the garrison held out manfully, though suffering from famine and a severe epidemic. Besiegers and besieged laboured incessantly at the dam; the first to maintain it, and the latter to break it down. The superstitious inhabitants believed it could not have been raised without the assistance of magical power, and they attempted to resort to the same supernatural means for its destruction. Wizards and exorcists are, in barbarous times, soon found when they are wanted; and it is well known that men have actually believed themselves to be possessed by the spirit of concentrated evil, or to have power over him. A monk of Toula presented himself before the rebel chiefs, and boasted that he possessed the power of controlling the agents of darkness. He made the somewhat suspicious offer of overthrowing the infernal schemes of the enemy



on consideration of a reward of a hundred roubles. His proposal was accepted, and, stripping off his clothes, he plunged into the swollen river, and was lost to sight. As some time passed without his reappearance, he was given up for dead. After the lapse of an hour, however, he rose to the surface, with his body covered with scratches. These he accounted for by saying, "I have just had to do with the twelve thousand devils at work on Schuisky's dam. I have settled six thousand of them, but the others are the worst of all, and will not give in."

The garrison and inhabitants of Toula still held bravely out, despite the inundation, and the terrible effects of famine, which were felt more severely every day. Rumours that Dmitri was coming to their assistance with an army, supported and sustained them; but it is needless to say, that he did not make his appearance. Yet such was the indomitable spirit of the Cossacks, that when Prince Shakhofskoi, the principal conspirator, proposed to capitulate, they indignantly thrust him into a dungeon. At length, all the horses, dogs, and carrion of the town were consumed, and the hour of inevitable submission approached. The town was surrendered to the czar on condition of an amnesty being granted to the garrison and inhabitants; but the leaders of the insurrection were not included in this act of grace. Bolotnikof, though a rebel, was at the least a brave man, and such a one as a generous sovereign would have pardoned. He approached the czar with an undaunted air, and presenting his sword with the edge turned towards his neck, said—"I have kept the oath I swore to him who, rightfully or wrongfully, calls himself Dmitri. Deserted by him, I am in thy power. Cut off my head if thou wilt; or if thou wilt spare my life, I will serve thee as faithfully as I served him." This manly appeal did not affect Schuisky. He sent the bold rebel to a distant prison, where he was soon after put to death. As to the impostor Peter Feodorovitch, Schuisky caused him to be hanged at once; but Shakhofskoi, whom he found in a dungeon, had the address to obtain his liberty, by persuading the czar that he had been so treated in consequence of an attempt to induce the rebels to return to their allegiance.

While Schuisky was engaged in the attempt to crush rebellion at Toula, it appeared in a more dangerous form else-

where. A new impostor arose in the frontier town of Starodub, and boldly proclaimed himself to be the czar Dmitri. The audacity of the attempt was remarkable; for the new speculator, in a game where the stakes were a crown or the scaffold, did not bear any resemblance to the unfortunate man whose name he assumed. Dmitri was at least a prince in his appearance, manners, and education; but the new candidate for a sceptre or a grave was a vulgar and ignorant fellow, whose numerous deficiencies for the part he assumed to play, were supplied only by a daring effrontery. The original position of the man was a humble one, though some doubt exists as to its exact nature. Some writers aver that he was a Russian school-master; others, that he was a Polish Jew, named Michael Moltehanof.

Such was the unsettled state of the country, the knavery of some of the people, and the credulity of others, that the new twice-murdered Dmitri not only obtained numerous adherents, but was even received with enthusiasm. Zurucki, a Polish adventurer, who had become a leader of the Cossacks of the Don, and had won distinction in the service of the first Dmitri, entered that of the new pretender, and impudently declared that he recognised him as the late czar. Miechawiecki, another Pole, who had held a distinguished position in the court of the first Dmitri, also affected to recognise his master in the new intrigant. Indeed, the latter was secretly instructed by Miechawiecki in the details connected with his assumed character.

Dmitri—as, for the purpose of avoiding circumlocution, we shall call the new impostor—grew rapidly in popularity and in strength. He defeated a considerable force sent against him by the czar, and advanced as far as the town of Kozelsk, on the road to the capital; though he was compelled to retire when Schuisky had made himself master of Toula. Still adherents flocked to the adventurer; and many Polish officers of distinction joined his standard, together with large bodies of their countrymen. Amongst them was Prince Adam Wyszynowicki, who brought with him 2,000 armed horsemen. This unprincipled noble knew at a glance that the new pretender was not the Dmitri whom he had been the first to assist; still he countenanced the deception, in the hope of being able to place a puppet of his countrymen on the throne of Russia.



Schuisky directed his forces against his new antagonist; and in the month of April, 1608, they were defeated, with great slaughter, by those of the pretender, near the banks of the Volkhof. The routed forces of the czar fled in disorder to Moscow; and the capital itself was in danger of falling into the hands of Dmitri and his followers. It had been suggested, that the Polish leaders were not disposed to bring the war to a speedy conclusion. Whatever was the cause, they halted about twelve versts from Moscow, at the village of Tushino, where Dmitri established both his camp and court. From this circumstance, his opponents gave him the name of "the Robber of Tushino."

We mentioned that Marina, the young wife of the czar Dmitri, had escaped the massacre that accompanied the insurrection to which her husband fell a victim. She and her father, the Palatine Sandomir, had, since that period, been kept in confinement by Schuisky, who now thought it politic to liberate them; only exacting a pledge that they would not bear arms against Russia, or favour the new pretender. He then allowed them to depart, under the protection of a small escort. It was intercepted by a body of Poles from Tushino, who brought to the disgraced czarina and her father a letter from the assumed Dmitri. "Come," said the document, "both of you to me, instead of going into Poland to hide yourselves from the world's scorn." No doubt little choice was left to the humbled girl and her father, as they were in effect prisoners to the band who had crossed their path; but they went without much unwillingness to pay a visit to "the Robber." Marina, frivolous and wanton, longing for the pleasures which she associated with the enjoyment of royalty, and burning for revenge upon those who had murdered her husband and hurled her from splendour to desolation, was willing even to acknowledge a vulgar impostor to be her husband, and to share the bed of one who might, perhaps, be able to replace the imperial diadem upon her brow. On being brought into the presence of the man whom she was to acknowledge as the husband to whom he bore no resemblance, the natural womanly emotions of Marina made her recoil from so impudent a deception. What delicacy she possessed rose within in insurrection against the abandoned part she was playing. It was a painful thing at once to

lay aside her modesty, and to become, morally speaking, a harlot, though the reward for her offence might be grandeur and revenge. But she had made her choice; and, at a second interview, she publicly embraced the impostor as her husband, and apologised for her former coldness, which she said arose only from a doubt that what she beheld was perhaps but a delusion, and that she could not at once believe her dear Dmitri to be alive again.

This recognition of the adventurer by Marina greatly assisted his cause. The people reasoned that it was not possible that a wife could be deceived as to the identity of her husband; and as they were not disposed to suspect her of falsehood, they concluded that the present Dmitri was, indeed, the czar. But the chief strength of the pretender lay in his Polish adherents, who were disliked by the Russians, and divided amongst themselves. Such was the jealous feeling with which their commanders regarded each other, that it became necessary to resort to the dangerous expedient of separating them. Dmitri sent Sapieha with a force, amounting to 30,000 men and sixty cannon, to reduce the monastery and fortress of the Trinity, near Moscow. This place conferred a considerable moral support or sanction to whoever held it. The monks adhered to Schuisky; and so valuable was their aid in influencing the loyalty of the people, that it was considered the loss of the monastery would go far towards promoting his ruin.

Sapieha and his Poles were, notwithstanding their numerical force, unable to take the monastery. Subjected to harassing attacks from the surrounding peasantry, they were at length defeated in a sanguinary engagement, and compelled to retire for shelter within the walls of Dmitrof. Skopin Schuisky and James de la Gardie, assisted by 5,000 Swedish auxiliaries, had taken the field for the czar in the spring of 1609, and gained many successes, by which the aspect of the war was changed. It was Skopin who defeated Sapieha; but the jealousy of the czar induced him to recall his brave relative to the capital, where, two months afterwards, he died suddenly—a circumstance which brought upon Schuisky the odium of having poisoned him.

The King of Poland, though he had deferred his design of revenge for the massacre of his subjects at Moscow, had not abandoned it. In September, 1609, Sigismund, having



declared war, entered Russia with a small army, and laid siege to the important town of Smolensk. Most of the Poles who had hitherto followed Dmitri, obeyed the command of their sovereign, and flocked to his standard—a circumstance which reduced the pretender to great distress and danger, though he yet held possession of Kaluga, Toula, and other places.

Amidst all this confusion and crash of selfish interests, the country was falling into a distracted state. Governed by a powerless czar, torn by an unprincipled and factious nobility, furrowed by the tracks of opposing armies, it naturally followed that commerce was oppressed, civilisation driven back, and the coherence of the empire itself endangered. Those calamities also arose which are ever found in a disordered state. Bands of Polish mercenaries offered their services to the highest bidder, and lived upon plunder, until they were hired to slay their fellow-men for any reason whatever. A powerful and worthless Russian noble, Procope Liapunof, also indulged his appetite for blood and plunder at the expense of his suffering country. Having no valid claim to put forward, he assumed to be greatly interested in religion, and proclaimed himself the defender of the faith: his pretensions were of little importance; but what he did was to carry on a war of extermination against the adherents of either Schuisky or Dmitri. This necessarily placed him in a hostile position towards the great mass of the people; and such was the brutality of his nature, that a Russian chronicler applied to him the remark which had been in past times made use of concerning Attila: "No grass grew where his horse's hoof had trod."

During the seven years that the unprincipled and incompetent Schuisky occupied the throne, Russia was a prey to desolating anarchy and civil war. Ill-fortune almost constantly attended the proceedings of this poor shadow of an imperial ruler. An army of nearly 60,000 men, consisting partly of Swiss mercenaries, whom he sent to the relief of Smolensk, was disgracefully defeated at Tushino by the veteran Polish general Zolkiewski, at the head of a very small army of his countrymen.

Smolensk surrendered to Sigismund: the power of the czar Schuisky had been annihilated by the Poles, who, led by Zolkiewski, directed their march upon the capital, where the people were in a state of insurrection. The fortunes of the pretended Dmitri were

thus again raised from the dust, for the Poles advocated his cause, and claimed for him the Russian sceptre. The citizens of Moscow, finding the Polish army thundering at their gates, were thrown into a state of consternation. In this position they resorted to cunning, and rested their hope of escape from destruction in an attempt to create division between Dmitri and the Poles. They accordingly opened their gates to the latter; and, delivering their czar Schuisky and his two brothers to Zolkiewski, professed their willingness to place Uladislav, or Ladislav, the son of Sigismund, the Polish king, upon the throne of Russia. The offer was accepted, and the prince proclaimed. The deposed Schuisky, fearing that assassination might follow on his fall from power, obtained permission to retire into a monastery. The Poles, however, did not long leave him even in this obscure retreat. As a punishment for the indignities he had heaped upon the husband of Marina, they threw him into a prison, where he lingered out the remainder of his worthless life.

The pretended Dmitri was scarcely more fortunate. The Poles abandoned his cause when Uladislav was proclaimed czar of Russia, and the adventurer then became little better than a robber and a public pest. Having lost all hope of ascending the throne of Moscow, he kept up his camp at Kaluga, surrounded by ferocious gangs of Cossacks and Tartars, who obtained their support by plundering the neighbouring country. At length he was murdered by a Tartar chieftain, in revenge for having taken the life of one of the countrymen of the latter. Shortly after the death of the impostor, Marina became the mother of a son, to whom the followers of the late Dmitri swore allegiance. That poor infant, however, was not to become a brand of discord in the country of its birth; its little life was soon to be tragically extinguished.

After the deposition of Schuisky, Russia had, in fact, no ruler, and an interregnum existed. Pretenders arose almost daily, and disappeared with as much rapidity; the Russian nobles abandoned themselves to the most grasping avarice; universal disorder prevailed; and the empire was swayed by an incessant fluctuation of names and authorities. Not only Poland, but Sweden, also, aimed at becoming masters of this immense territory. The son of the Polish sovereign had been proclaimed,



and even invited to Moscow to assume the imperial dignity. But here a difficulty arose: a condition had been made, that before Uladislas could ascend the Russian throne, he should adopt the Greek form of Christianity. Sigismund, though he had agreed to this condition, was not disposed to fulfil it. He first hesitated, and then refused. His motives might have been conscientious ones; but it is said that he repented having nominated his son to the sovereignty of Russia, instead of having secured the crown of the northern empire for himself. Whatever was the cause, his vacillation was fatal to his ambition. Zolkiewski, incensed at the conduct of his master, and still more so that he could not obtain money for the payment of his troops, returned in disgust to Poland, leaving his countrymen in Moscow under the command of a leader of little or no military talent.

The people of Moscow now began to reflect upon their conduct in reference to recent events. They saw that their nationality was at stake: a revulsion of feeling took place; and a sense of something approaching to patriotism sprung up amongst them. Was Russia to remain a powerful empire, or become a dependency of the comparatively little kingdom of Poland? No less a question was now to be decided. Moreover, its religion was at stake; for the Russians soon began to perceive, that after the election of a catholic czar, there was no security for the Greek religion. This reflection decided the clergy; who, as if roused from a strange slumber, devoted themselves with untiring energy to arousing the national feelings of the people. At the call of the patriarch Hermogenes, they armed themselves and rose in hostility against the Polish garrisons. A furious contest followed, and great slaughter took place on both sides. After burning down a considerable part of Moscow, the Poles took refuge within the Kremlin. There, encompassed by the walls of this old heart of the empire, which the Russians deemed polluted by the presence of foreign intruders, the Poles were besieged by three armies from the Russian provinces. Of these, the only really formidable one was that led by Procope Liapunof—the turbulent noble who had hitherto plundered and slaughtered both Poles and Russians alike,

in the name of religion, of which he assumed himself to be the defender. But this human nuisance was assassinated, and his disheartened followers dispersed. Still the siege of the Kremlin was maintained, though the country generally seemed abandoned to irretrievable confusion, and almost inevitable partition. Kasan and Viatka proclaimed the infant son of Marina as their sovereign; the citizens of Novgorod, out of hatred to the Poles, offered the crown to Charles Philip, the second son of the reigning king of Sweden; while at Pleskof, another impostor arose, and calling himself Dmitri, claimed the Russian sceptre: the knavery of this fellow, however, soon became apparent: he was identified as a fugitive monk; and after adding for a while to the distraction of his country, met the fate he deserved, and was hanged.

But in the career of nations, as in that of men, the hour of the blackest darkness is commonly followed by that of the gray streaks of dawn; the time of the severest danger and most painful trial, by one of at least tranquillity and repose. Thus, when the fate of the empire seemed doomed, there arose a man of the people, who, influenced by a powerful sense of patriotism, succeeded in reviving the drooping energies of his countrymen, aroused their nationality, and induced them to unite their efforts. Once again the cry rang throughout the land, of "Russia for the Russians." This man, Kozma Minin, was merely a butcher; but his unselfish energy obtained him so much popularity, that he was called "the Elect of the whole Russian empire." Through his exertions, a Russian army, under Prince Pojarski, took the field, dislodged the Poles from the Kremlin, and, after a severe struggle, forced them to abandon the empire. The Polish monarch now saw the mistake he had made, and was willing that his son should adopt the Greek faith, so that he might rule the great empire of the north. It was too late; the Russians were now thoroughly aroused, and they treated his offers to that effect with disdain. Sigismund would have renewed the conflict, and endeavoured to force the Russians to submit to his wishes; but his own subjects were not disposed to enter into another war, and he was very unwillingly forced to submit, at least for a time, to a state of things which he could not avert.



## CHAPTER XV.

ASSEMBLY OF DEPUTIES TO ELECT A NEW CZAR; THE ROMANOFF FAMILY; MICHAEL ROMANOFF ELECTED AS CZAR; AN OATH LIMITING HIS AUTHORITY IS REQUIRED FROM HIM; THE SETTLING DOWN OF THE ELEMENTS OF DISCORD; UNSUCCESSFUL WARS WITH SWEDEN AND POLAND; MICHAEL CONFERS THE DIGNITY OF PATRIARCH UPON HIS FATHER, AND SHARES THE GOVERNMENT WITH HIM; CHARACTER AND DEATH OF MICHAEL.

THE seven years of discord which had prevailed in Russia were drawing to a close. The expulsion of the Poles left the nation at liberty to proceed as it pleased with respect to the formation of a government. Anarchy, and the misery which ever attends it, had exerted a purifying influence upon the nobles and people; and the emotion of patriotism obtained that sway over them which it commonly has over all civilised states. It has been observed, that the Russians "felt that the last spring of hope was within themselves. That it was worse than fruitless to place any trust in the protection and fosterage of neighbouring states, who only made their necessities an excuse for preying upon the last fragments of their means; and that security for life or property could not be obtained through any other measure than the establishment of the sovereignty in the person of some man who should combine the qualities of the statesman with that loftiness of character which should elevate him above the reach of faction."

Rulers of this kind are at all times desirable; but they are not commonly to be found. It is not likely that the vicious nobility of Russia could furnish one. But the attempt must be made; and in the month of November, 1612, the boyards of the council summoned the inhabitants of every town throughout the empire immediately to send deputies to Moscow, to meet in national council, and proceed to the election of a new czar. To render the occasion the more solemn, and also with the object of obtaining the blessing of heaven upon it, a national fast of three days was proclaimed, and most rigorously observed.

The election took place during Lent, in the year 1613; but the new czar had previously been chosen. Two of the ancient princes of Russia declined to put forward any claim for a crown, the possession of which would probably expose them to the jealous animosity of their peers. Few others

were able to obtain the confidence of the people; while it was useless for any candidate to start from the ranks of the latter, as the nobility would have instantly combined to dethrone him, on account of the humility of his origin. After much debate and hesitation, the name of Michael Romanoff was generally pronounced as the person to whom the destinies of his country were to be entrusted.

This Romanoff was a youth only, in his seventeenth year; and the election by the people of such a person did not, as Voltaire has observed, seem to be the surest way of putting an end to their troubles. His fitness for the distinguished position of ruler of the Russian empire was somewhat of a negative character, and consisted largely of his not being obnoxious to the nobility, and less likely, therefore, to excite their jealousy. At the same time it must be remarked, that he came of a family which enjoyed the confidence of the people, and of a father who was generally esteemed by them. On the female side the Romanoffs were distantly related to the extinct dynasty of Ruric. Michael was himself too young to have any strongly-marked character, or to be at all known to the people; but great reliance was placed on his father Philaret, who had inflexibly asserted the independence of the empire under the least hopeful aspects. One circumstance might have militated against the general feeling in favour of the young Michael. The family was not of a Russian stock. Its founder is said to have been an obscure Prussian, who settled in Russia about 1350; but, for two centuries and a-half, all who bore the name had been distinguished for public virtue, national zeal, and brilliant achievements. At the time of the election, Philaret was a captive in Poland; for he was one of several ambassadors whom Sigismund, regardless of the generous fiction which deems the persons of such officers to be sacred, had carried away with him when he abandoned Russia.



Though Philaretos contrived to communicate with the council of the boyards, and use his influence in the election, it is said that he had no idea the imperial honour would be conferred upon his son.

The day of election came, and the choice fell upon Michael Romanoff. His name was received with acclamation, and he was chosen by the unanimous voice of the assembly. Certain conditions considered requisite were fulfilled in him. "There were but three surviving members in his family," says Strahlenberg; "he had not been implicated in the preceding troubles; his father was an ecclesiastic, and in consequence, naturally more disposed to secure peace and union, than to mix himself up in turbulent projects."

Michael Romanoff was unwilling to accept the crown; he remembered the fate of Boris, Dmitri, and Schuisky, and declined the offered dignity. He had lived in strict retirement with his mother; and that lady, on the arrival of the deputies, entreated them, with tears in her eyes, to spare her son the intended distinction. Decisions of this kind are, however, seldom persevered in; and upon the repetition of the offer, it was accepted. While the power was yet in the hands of the people, they wisely resolved to obtain some recognition from the newly-elected czar, of the *duties* as well as of the right of his exalted position—some guarantee, or at least solemn promise, that he would not abuse the sacred trust reposed in him. With this object, they proposed to him the following oath, which, as it placed a rational limitation on the hitherto absolute power of the czar, would, if rigidly observed, have transformed the government from a despotism to something resembling what in England we call a constitutional government. The oath which was proposed to, and accepted by Michael, ran thus:—"That he would protect religion; that he would pardon and forget all that had been done to his father; that he would make no new laws, nor alter the old, unless circumstances imperatively required it; and that, in important causes, he would decide nothing by himself, but that the existing laws, and the usual forms of trial, should remain in force; that he would not at his own pleasure make either war or peace with his neighbours; and that, to avoid all suits with individuals, he would resign his estates to his family, or incorporate them with the crown domains."

The throne which the young czar ascended had been stripped of much of its power and magnificence. A Russian writer thus describes the internal condition of his country at this period:—"Bands of Cossacks, from the Don and the Zaporogues, and whole divisions of Poles and Tartars, ravaged the villages and the convents that were still entire, where there were hopes of finding booty. The country was wasted, soldiers were dying of hunger, the land-tax was no longer collected, and not a kopeck was in the treasury. The state jewels, crowns of great price, sceptres, precious stones, vases—all had been plundered and carried into Poland. The young prince was surrounded by persons belonging to twenty different factions. There were to be found the friends of Godunof, the defenders of Schuisky, the companions of Uladislav, and even partisans of the brigand of Tushino; in a word, men professing the most various opinions and aims, but all equally ambitious, and incapable of yielding the smallest point as regarded precedence. The lower class, irritated by ten years of misery, were become habituated to anarchy; and it was not without difficulty, and resistance on their part, that they were reduced to obedience."

Notwithstanding these deplorable and trying circumstances, the young czar was successful in restoring tranquillity to the country; or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that his election having silenced all other claims, tranquillity naturally succeeded to a state which bordered upon exhaustion. Michael himself was not, even in mature life, the sort of man to rule the storm, and awe the turbulent into submission.

Michael Romanoff had soon to contend against a formidable foreign foe. This was Gustavus Adolphus, the young king of Sweden, who afterwards, by his holy struggle of thirty years in favour of religious liberty, obtained the honourable title of "the Lion of the North, and the Bulwark of the Protestant Faith." Gustavus was one of the most just and honourable men that ever wore a crown; and his proceeding against Russia did not arise from any attempt to profit by its misfortunes. The war arose chiefly from the dishonesty of the Russians, who refused to repay to Sweden a sum of money advanced to her in a period of distress. Gustavus was greatly offended at this dishonesty; and leading a powerful army across the Russian frontier, he took



possession of the province of Ingria. This success was followed by others, remarkable alike for their rapidity and brilliancy. They brought Gustavus, however, little else than reputation; and in the year 1617, peace was restored between Sweden and Russia. The latter country purchased the cessation of hostilities at a heavy price. She was compelled to submit to the cession of Ingria and Karelia, and once again to give up Esthonia and Livonia. Though dishonesty oftener succeeds with nations than with individuals, it sometimes, as in the present case, meets with the punishment it deserves.

The year before peace was concluded with Sweden, the frivolous and unhappy Marina, the widow of the two Dmitris, closed her chequered and restless career. Influenced, probably more by a mother's affection than by personal ambition, she contrived to get up an insurrection in favour of her infant child, the son of the "Robber of Tushino," whom she announced to be the true heir to the throne. Schemes of this kind had had their day; they were now almost worthless, for popular credulity no longer ran in the direction of resuscitating murdered princes, or finding new and suspicious claimants to the throne. The people did not second the mad attempt, and the chief conspirators were seized. No mercy was shown to them. Zurucki, the leader of the insurrection, was impaled; Marina thrown into a prison, where she was eventually murdered; and her child, the poor infant, who was but three years old, hanged or strangled! Such a circumstance is painful and revolting; but it must be recollected that we are speaking of a semi-barbarous people, in an age altogether barbarous.

Sigismund, the king of Poland, was unable long to acquiesce in the recent decision of the nobles and people of Russia; and he still cast longing glances towards the throne he had lost by his irresolution and equivocal conduct. He therefore, in 1617, sent his son, Prince Uladislav, across the Russian frontiers with an army. The latter penetrated even to the walls of Moscow, but obtained no satisfactory results. In fact, the struggle was soon discovered to be profitless and exhausting to both sides; and, after many Poles and Russians had perished by the sword, and more by the severity of the weather, an armistice was entered into on the 1st of December, 1618. It was to last for fourteen years, and was accepted by each nation as a present necessity, which

they intended to disregard as soon as they had the power to do so without involving too heavy a sacrifice. In this instance, also, Russia purchased peace at the price of territory; for she abandoned Smolensk and several other towns to the enemy, not, however, without a secret intention of getting them back again on the first favourable opportunity.

On the conclusion of peace with Poland, Philaret, the father of the young czar Michael, was restored to liberty, and returned to his native land. He arrived at Moscow in June, 1619, and was immediately raised by his son to the office of patriarch, which had been vacant for several years. The affection of the czar even led him to associate his father with him in the government, and divide with the venerable pontiff the dignity of the sceptre. Henceforth his ukases, or imperial edicts, were headed—"Michael Feodorovitch, sovereign, czar, and grand prince of all the Russias, and his father Philaret, mighty lord, and most holy patriarch of all the Russias, &c." Such, indeed, was the influence of the father, that he sometimes issued ukases in his own name alone; and the power he exercised was more absolute than that of his son. At solemn audiences he sat on the right-hand of the czar, and all foreign ambassadors were specially presented to him. He held his own court, and raised the patriarchate to such a height of power and splendour, as to cause it, in after-times, to excite the jealousy of Peter the Great, who consequently abolished it. Fortunately, the vast influence of Philaret was exercised for good; and to him is attributed the endurance of the tranquillity which prevailed during the reign of his son. He appears, indeed, to have been a very estimable character; and he revived that feeble civilisation which discord had almost extirpated from the land. Among many other useful labours, he re-established a printing-press at Moscow, and had the satisfaction of seeing many copies of the Liturgy issued from it.

The czar himself appears to have had neither a large amount of mind or principle. It was dishonesty which brought upon him a chastisement from Sweden; and he now resorted to some equivocal conduct towards Poland. The amnesty with that nation was approaching a termination, and Michael busied himself in collecting a powerful army, that he might imme-



diately, upon its expiration, reconquer the provinces he had been compelled to cede to Sigismund. That monarch had been succeeded by his son Uladislas; and Michael, taking advantage of the disorders attending the installation of the new sovereign, commenced hostilities even before the close of the armistice, on the pettifogging pretext that he had entered into it with Sigismund, and not with his successor. This vile quibble, unworthy of a monarch of any position, again brought punishment and disgrace upon its inventor.

Uladislas, though surrounded by difficulties, and at a loss both for money and troops, was an able soldier, and the idol of his people. Seconded by the declared wish of his council, he took the field against the Russians, who, after several destructive incursions into his territories, were engaged in the military investment of Smolensk, preparatory to laying siege to it. The Russian army of 50,000 men was under the command of a general named Michael Sekin, who had earned a reputation in the field for promptness, activity and courage. These qualities seemed at length to have deserted him. Having remained in complete inaction for two whole years, encamped within sight of Smolensk, he fled before the far inferior force of Uladislas. Sekin took refuge in an intrenched camp within the depths of the neighbouring forests; but there he was pursued by the Polish king. The Russians resisted their assailants for five months, and trusted to the extreme severity of the winter to rid them of the Poles. The ranks of the latter were rapidly thinned by the bitterness of the weather. The soldiers, however, were nerved to endurance by the heroism and self-denial of their king, who took up his abode in a wretched hut, and submitted to the same privations as those endured by the meanest of his followers. Sekin at length, not daring to encounter his hardy enemies, submitted; and surrendering his camp to Uladislas, purchased safety by entering into an engagement not to take any further part in the war. For this unsoldierly behaviour, Sekin and several of his officers were brought to account, and suffered the punishment of decapitation.

The beheading of a few unsuccessful or timid soldiers, did not bring Russia any nearer to a triumph over her foes. The Poles proceeded in their energetic course, and took possession of many places, of which Viazma was the most considerable.

The czar Michael was alarmed; for he feared a descent upon Moscow, and the probable loss of his capital, and perhaps of his throne. He therefore resolved to shuffle out of this war, into which he had been so dishonestly eager to enter. He had sufficient cause; for the Russian troops were not a match for those of Poland, of whom they stood in awe: consequently, all the victory was upon one side, and the sufferance upon the other—a distribution of matters extremely unsatisfactory to the weaker party. So Michael sued to Uladislas for peace, which the latter only granted at the price of the cession of a large extent of territory. The Polish monarch was, on his part, to renounce all claims upon the throne of Russia, and to return the diploma of election which had been sent to him: but as he thought the latter might, some time or other, be useful, he pretended it was lost, and the Russians were obliged to close the treaty without receiving it.

Michael had a long reign, extending over a period of thirty-two years; but it was neither eventful nor illustrious. Historians have pronounced it as “distinguished by moderation.” It would have been better to have said *characterised* by moderation; for it was not distinguished in any sense, except in the altogether accidental circumstance, that Michael was the founder of a new dynasty. The first czar of the Romanoff line was a feeble, tepid, no-character sort of man; apparently composed, as one of our poets very ungallantly said of the opposite sex, of “matter too soft a lasting mark to bear.” In the early part of his reign, he rushed into quarrels without any regard for their justice or injustice; but he afterwards got very much more prudent, and warily avoided entering upon wars which he was incapable of conducting. At all times he had the negative merit of being able to see his own mistakes, and to retreat from the consequences before the latter became too serious. Yet such an insipid ruler as this was an advantage to the country. Russia wanted peace and leisure to recover from the terrible ravages to which she had been subjected. The empire enjoyed peace under a czar who was unable to conduct war; for it fortunately happened that neighbouring nations were too much engaged with their own affairs, to think of aggressions. The length of Michael’s reign, also, gave the country that leisure which



was necessary for the restoration of order, security, and an approach to the proper administration of justice. Russia regained strength during the passive reign of Michael; and he obtained the credit of a change due only to the undisturbed action of natural laws. It has been well observed, that "his reign was the term of convalescence; that which followed was the development of restored

strength." True; but Michael was like the wily physician who, observing the restoring influence of nature upon his almost exhausted patient, takes credit for the cure he was unable to accomplish. Michael expired on the 12th of July, 1645, and left the throne to his son, Alexis Michaelowitz, by his second consort Eudokia Lukianowna Streshnew.

## CHAPTER XVI.

ALEXIS BECOMES CZAR; COUNCIL OF REGENCY; ITS AVARICE AND EXTORTIONS; INSURRECTION IN CONSEQUENCE; A NEW PRETENDER TO THE THRONE; THE COSSACKS OF THE UKRAINE; COSSACK INSURRECTION UNDER BOGDAN CHMIELNICKI; BOGDAN SOLICITS AID FROM ALEXIS, AND PROFFERS HIS ALLEGIANCE; TRIUMPHS OF ALEXIS OVER THE POLES; CHARLES GUSTAVUS OF SWEDEN SNATCHES POLAND FROM THE GRASP OF RUSSIA; BRIEF AND PROFITLESS WAR WITH SWEDEN; RUSSIA OBTAINS POSSESSION OF THE UKRAINE, AND THE COSSACKS ACKNOWLEDGE THE SWAY OF THE CZAR; PEACE RESTORED; DEPRECIATION OF THE CURRENCY, AND CONSEQUENT INSURRECTION; SEVERITY OF THE CZAR; HE GOVERNS WISELY; BUILDS THE FIRST RUSSIAN VESSELS; INSURRECTION OF STENKA RADZIN; OUTRAGES COMMITTED BY HIM; HE IS TREACHEROUSLY SEIZED AND EXECUTED; DISPUTE WITH TURKEY; DEATH OF ALEXIS.

ALEXIS, who was born at Moscow in 1630, was therefore but in his sixteenth year at the death of his father. In consequence of the youth of the new czar, he was guided in all government affairs by a council nominated by his deceased parent. These were three grasping and worthless persons. The chief of them was Morosof, a noble of an ambitious and intriguing temper, who was tutor and brother-in-law of Alexis, and was suspected of a desire to tread in the steps of Boris Godunof. The others were Miloslavskoi and Plessow; the latter a judge in one of the high courts at Moscow.

Morosof took the lead in the administration, and showed both ability and energy in the introduction of military reforms, and in strengthening the Russian frontiers against Poland and Sweden. He also erected manufactories for arms, in which he employed a number of foreign artisans. Indeed, for a while Morosof ruled Russia in the name of the czar, and might have continued to do so much longer, but for the imprudence of himself and his compeers.

Avarice was the ruling passion of the whole three, and they were incessantly bent upon the accumulation of wealth, without the slightest compunction as to the means by which they did so. The base dishonesty with which they acted, was as mean as it

was unbecoming in men of high position. The records of most European nations, even at so comparatively modern a period as that of which we now speak, reveal incidents which often make us blush for humanity. Yet remembering this, there does still appear to have been a more than ordinary addiction to petty vices in Russian nobles and ministers, and a more incessant grasping after bribes and penalties, than is to be heard of in other countries laying claim to civilisation. Under the direction of Morosof, the most flagrant enormities were committed, especially in the administration of justice. The public courts were made mere instruments of extortion; and the judges, whom Morosof appointed, sold their decisions with a more than common audacity and openness, and shared the tainted produce with their high-placed accomplice. These men scarcely concealed the infamous trade they carried on in selling the sentences they so gravely pronounced; and such was the extent to which they carried their shameless profligacy, that many of them kept a number of depraved vagabonds in their pay, who were ready at all times, for a trifling sum, to come forward and affirm or deny anything. These fellows were also employed as spies upon the wealthy, whom they would get arrested



upon some real or concocted charge, for which the unfortunate accused could only get exonerated by the payment of heavy fines. In some cases persons unjustly charged were sentenced to death and executed, merely that the villanous judge and his ruffian assistants might seize the property of the presumed criminal.

Oppression of this galling kind had a most demoralising and injurious effect upon the people, whom it was rapidly converting into two classes—the plundered and the plunderers. But not only was the fountain of justice polluted for the basest of purposes, but the whole system of government was used as a means of extortion. Monopolies were created, and the heaviest taxes laid even upon the necessities of life. In addition to this, those officials who plundered the people most, behaved to them with an insolent haughtiness which caused great offence.

Murmurs were giving place to curses; and the temper of the people of Moscow, who were the greatest sufferers from the prevailing iniquities, grew threatening. They first addressed a number of petitions to the czar, imploring a reform of abuses, and plainly exposing the oppressive dishonesty of the council of regency. Morosof took care that none of these petitions reached the young monarch, and things went on as before. But the fraudulent minister had not rightly estimated the perseverance and the power of a goaded and insulted people. Guessing the fate of their petitions, they resorted to a more effective way of reaching the ear of their sovereign. Waylaying him one day as he was returning from church to his palace, they reiterated their complaints, and, with loud outcries and fierce gestures, demanded the appointment of righteous judges and officers, instead of those who were merely instruments of knavery and extortion. Alexis listened with patience, promised to make a strict inquiry into the grievances complained of, and to inflict punishment on the guilty. At an earlier period, such an assurance would have calmed the popular excitement; but now it came too late. The people had learned to distrust judicial inquiries; and they believed that their oppressors, if left in the hands of the law, would be suffered to escape, if not to plunder them still. The limits of passive endurance had been past, and affairs had arrived at that point where discontent merges into insurrection. Leaving the czar, they proceeded in a state of furious

tumult to the houses of the public officers who had incurred their displeasure. These they broke into and plundered; while the principal magistrate and a few others they put to death. Even Morosof himself would have fallen a victim to their fury, but that he was saved by the entreaties of the czar, who implored the mob, with tears in his eyes, to spare the guilty minister. This they consented to do, on condition that Alexis put another corrupt judge to death and promised to remit some of the recent oppressive taxes. The young monarch was wise enough to see and avoid the precipice upon the verge of which he had been so unconsciously standing. Though he had saved the life of Morosof, yet he prudently dismissed that worthless man, together with his associates, from the imperial councils.

This event occurred in 1648, in the third year of the young czar's reign; and not long after, disturbances scarcely less violent, and arising from similar causes, broke out at Novgorod and at Pskof. Salutary measures were, however, instantly taken; the guilty instruments of corruption were restrained or dismissed, and tranquillity soon returned. Necessarily, the cause of discontent being removed, the effect ceased.

It might be supposed that no one had the effrontery again to personate the thrice-murdered Dmitri. This source of imposture seemed utterly exhausted; but let none presume to set bounds to the extravagances of credulity and knavery. An obscure and worthless young man, the son of a draper in the Ukraine, suffered himself to be made the tool of a scheming Polish nobleman, named Danilovski, who hoped, by troubling the political waters, to be able to fish in them with ease and profit. One day, when the young draper was bathing, certain natural marks were observed on his back, of so peculiar a kind that it was surmised they resembled letters in some unknown tongue. The circumstance coming to the ears of the Polish intriguer, he resolved to create a conspiracy out of it, which might lead to the overthrow of the Russian government. Sending for the young man, he had the marks examined by a Greek priest, whom he had prepared and paid for the expected exposition. The vagabond priest, after looking intently upon the marks, exclaimed, "A miracle!" and then added, in explanation, that they were, indeed, mystic words, and that their signification was, "Dmitri, son of the czar Dmitri." The murder of Marina's



infant child was notorious, for the atrocious barbarity had been done in public, under the pretence of a legal execution; the difficulty, however, was clumsily evaded by the stale device of an alleged change of children. Both Poles and Swedes were invited to support the cause of the pretender, and some of the former nation offered their services. But the plot utterly failed to create a sensation in Russia; and the impostor, after leading a life of forlorn misery for a time, fell into the hands of the czar, who executed the unfortunate wretch by quartering him alive.

The hatred borne by the Russians to the Poles was not diminished by the reverses which the former suffered from the latter during the reign of Michael. Uladislas died in 1648, and Alexis became one of the candidates for the throne of Poland; but he was rejected by the people, who elected John Casimir, one of the sons of Sigismund III., who resigned his dignity of cardinal, and succeeded at once to his brother's throne and the hand of that brother's widow. This rejection was a fresh source of irritation to Alexis, who soon had an opportunity of expressing his displeasure.

The Ukraine (a name derived from the Polish, and signifying boundary) is the title of that vast and fertile tract of land lying on the banks of the broad Dnieper, and extending to those of the Don. This wild district had been peopled by the Cossacks, a race of mixed origin, but derived chiefly from Poles and Tartars. The nucleus of this singular people were deserters from the armies maintained by Poland near the banks of the Borysthènes, or Dnieper, to arrest the incursions of the Tartars. The almost inaccessible islands of that river, and the vast steppes of the Ukraine, served for places of retreat. The course of nature, and the constant arrival of fresh fugitives, rapidly increased their numbers. They opened their arms to recruits from every nation, and were joined by all the outcasts whose crimes compelled them to abandon civilised society. In this manner they ceased to be mere fugitives, and became a people. As may be supposed, their habits revealed the taint which sullied their origin. Plunder became a recognised pursuit amongst them. They frequently made predatory incursions into the Ottoman territories, sometimes venturing even as far as the suburbs of Constantinople. Such was their boldness, that they trusted themselves on the stormy surface of the Black Sea in mere boats of very primitive

construction, consisting only of trees hollowed out; and thus they ravaged every shore of that great inland water. As the richness of the soil they occupied made it produce without much labour, they were consequently at liberty to pass their time mostly in plunder, piracy, or open war. "As they were Christians in their origin, they preserved a sort of Christianity among themselves; but so mingled in time with idolatrous and Mohammed annotations, that its fair characters were almost lost. The Polish gentleman, whom infamy had branded or justice threatened; the Polish serf, who fled from the iron despotism of a haughty, rapacious master; the Greek schismatic, the persecuted Lutheran, either imperfectly remembered, or but negligently practised the rites of their respective churches: hence a sort of mongrel worship prevailed, of which the leading features more resembled the Eastern than the Western church. But they did not much trouble themselves with either the doctrines or the duties of Christianity. Robbers by profession, and cruel by habit, they were the terror of surrounding countries; strong, hardy, of indomitable courage, fond of war, even more for the dangers which attended it than for the plunder it procured them, their alliance was eagerly sought by Lithuanians, Poles, Muscovites, Tartars, and Turks. To the former people, as the stock whence the majority were derived, they long bore sentiments of affection; indeed, they acknowledged themselves vassals of the republic, though their chief obedience was owing to their own grand hetman. Ostafi Daskiewicz, a peasant on the estates of a Lithuanian noble (many nobles, both of the crown and the grand-duchy, had extensive estates in the Ukraine), was the first who divided them into regiments, and taught them discipline. As a reward for his exertions, he was presented by Sigismund I., who appeared sensible of the advantages which these formidable warriors might procure for the kingdom, with the starosty of Tserkassy, and the jurisdiction of some fortresses near the Borysthènes. Had the advice of this simple but strong-minded man been taken, Poland would have been effectually screened against the incursions of the Tartars. He counselled Sigismund to maintain 10,000 armed men on the banks of the river, who in their rude rafts could easily prevent the enemy from crossing: a few troops of horse might forage for this stationary little army. A still more important



suggestion was to build forts and little towers on the islets of that magnificent stream. What Sigismund had not the spirit, perhaps the means to accomplish, Bathori might and should have effected. The latter monarch, however, did much towards so desirable an end. He diligently cultivated the affection of the Cossacks; and they are among the most grateful of men. He gave them the city of Trychtymirov, which became their chief magazine, and the residence of their grand hetman; he introduced among them the useful arts of life, and greatly improved their discipline; he formed them into six regiments, each consisting of 1,000 men (ten companies of 100), and commanded by a hetman (*hattaman*.) Each grand hetman, whom the whole force obeyed, received his investiture at the hands of the king; the symbols were an ensign, a horse-tail (*bonzuck*), a baton resembling a club, and a looking-glass. The Cossacks, being thus attached by those of new ties—those of gratitude and allegiance—to the republic, were well disposed to fulfil the purpose assigned them: their fidelity was striking; until, from friends, they were transformed into enemies by the most intolerable wrongs.\*

Of these wrongs we must speak briefly, that it may be seen why the czar Alexis became engaged in a war with Poland. The nobles of that country long behaved towards the Cossacks with great haughtiness and inhumanity. Many grants of land in the Ukraine had been bestowed upon these nobles, who seldom visited their new possessions, which they abandoned to the direction of Jews—who, in Poland, as, indeed, elsewhere, were the most exacting and unpopular of stewards. These men usually advanced money on the forthcoming produce of the soil, and they were therefore naturally anxious to make the most of it, and less likely to show any indulgence in its collection. The fierce Cossacks would not submit in patience to this system of oppression; and they insisted, not only on the entire abolition of their grievances, but also that their chiefs should have a seat in the Polish diet. Their demands not being complied with, they rose in insurrection. They were at first defeated, and reduced to the condition of serfs; and the insolent Polish nobles even

resolved to extirpate them and their religion if they attempted to throw off the bondage thus forced upon them. Again the Cossacks rose in arms, and presented so formidable an appearance, that a promise was given that their privileges should be restored to them. The Polish rulers had no intention of keeping this promise; and the Cossacks knew as much, and no longer refrained from depredations on the territory of the former.

Such was the state of things, when a shameful outrage incensed the Cossacks, and drew down much trouble upon their oppressors. A veteran Cossack named Bogdan Chmielnicki, who was famous for the valour he had displayed against the Tartars, possessed a mill and some land near the banks of the Dnieper. This small estate was coveted by the steward of a Polish noble, who resolved to obtain it by ruining the owner. Preferring some petty charge against the Cossack, the latter was thrown into prison, but liberated through the interference of the castellan of Cracow, to whom he had rendered some service. But the protector of Bogdan died; and then Czapalinski, the covetous steward, seized the poor Cossack's mill and land. The latter, unable to obtain redress, fled to the Tartars for assistance. In his absence, the infamous Czapalinski violated and murdered Bogdan's wife, and then set fire to his house, the flames of which consumed his infant son. Another son, a young man, the ruffian procured to be publicly scourged, for expressing a natural indignation. Some accounts state, in explanation of the diabolical malice of the steward, that on one occasion he had been ignominiously whipped by the servants of Bogdan.

The hour of retribution soon arrived. The infuriated Bogdan succeeded in interesting the Tartars in his behalf; and at the head of 40,000 of them, he commenced a march against the Poles. His force was soon trebled by the number of Cossacks who flocked to his aid, in answer to a call to unite themselves in a great effort for liberty. Two successive Polish armies, which endeavoured to stem the tide of inundation, were swept away by it, their generals and officers led away captives, and 70,000 peasants consigned to bondage. In a short time Bogdan was in possession of the whole of the Ukraine. At this time, Uladislas died; and a brief interregnum followed, which necessarily favoured the

\* Dunham's *History of Poland*. Also Chevalier, *Histoire de la Guerre des Cossacs contre la Pologne*, &c., p. 302, &c. Malte-Brun, *Tableau de la Pologne ancienne et moderne*, tom. i., p. 464, &c.



progress of disorder. Bogdan, breathing threats of vengeance as he advanced, directed his steps towards Red Russia. In his destructive march through Podolia and Volhynia, the excesses committed by him and his followers were of a frightful and repulsive kind. He had been joined by crowds of Mussulmans, Greeks, and Socinians, who all, equally with himself, detested the Roman church; and his crusade of vengeance assumed something of a religious nature. The Jesuits, who had been notorious for their animosity to the Greek church, and the Jews, whose acquisitiveness in their capacity of stewards to the Polish landowners had excited the people against them, were visited with unrelenting vengeance. The Roman churches and monasteries were laid in ruins, and the nuns forced to satisfy the brutal appetites of the infuriated followers of this fierce avenger of a people's wrongs and an irreparable private injury. Some priests were forced, under threats of instant death should they refuse, not only to contract, but also to consummate, a marriage with the trembling inmates of the cloister; and frequently they were both afterwards slaughtered. But it was upon the recently insolent and oppressing nobles that the chief weight of vengeance fell. Those who were unfortunate enough to fall into the hands of the Tartars and the Cossacks, were put to death in various cruel and lingering ways; their unhappy wives and daughters also suffered even an aggravated doom. They were stripped naked before their husbands or fathers, and after being violated, were mercilessly flogged to death. Terrible as were these atrocities, it must be remembered that they were the inevitable retribution of an ignorant and infuriated people, lashed into desperation by a painful accumulation of wrongs.

But though the chivalry of Poland fled in dismay before the fierce hosts of Bogdan, yet the latter experienced a great reverse of fortune in the desertion of his Tartar allies; who, being well loaded with plunder and captives, retired to their own country to enjoy the proceeds of their expedition. On the election of John Casimir to the throne of Poland, that monarch admitted the justice of the complaints of Bogdan, and opened negotiations with the Cossack chief. While these were in progress, and Bogdan, relying upon the honour of the king, exercised less than his customary vigilance, his

camp was attacked by Wiszinowiecki, a Polish general, who committed a terrible slaughter amongst his followers. Bogdan was compelled to retreat; but it was with a stern resolve to punish this perfidy at the earliest opportunity. When he returned, he was reinforced by a large body of Tartars, and then invested the intrenched camp of the treacherous general. The combined forces under the command of Bogdan, are said to have amounted to 160,000 men. The army which Casimir advanced to relieve his besieged general was but 20,000 strong, and he was unable to effect a junction with those shut up in the camp. In this position, policy accomplished for him what valour could not effect. He bribed the khan of the Tartars to withdraw his followers from the Cossack host; and Bogdan, weakened by so vast a desertion, thought it prudent to accept the terms of peace proposed by the king.

This enforced tranquillity did not last. Instead of being grateful for their escape from utter destruction, the Polish nobles felt irritated by the shame of receiving a boon from a people whom the long habit of oppressing had made them despise. The nobles became the aggressors, and the war was renewed. The Poles collected an army of 100,000 men; and the contending forces met near Beresteeko, in Red Russia. Here, it has been observed, was at length decided the conflict between schism and orthodoxy—between slavery and tyranny. An obstinate and furious battle ensued, and terminated in the defeat of Bogdan, accompanied by a terrible slaughter of his followers. Though they retired from the field, it was with a threatening face towards the foe. Several contests took place; and in one of these, a body of nearly 40,000 Poles were almost exterminated by a sudden and sweeping onslaught of the insurgents. The balance of success was thus kept nearly equal; for if Bogdan had been staggered by defeat, Poland was thrown into terror and confusion. It was in this state of things that Bogdan, further incensed by the death of a brave son, applied for assistance to Russia, and offered to become the vassal of the czar Alexis, on condition that 200,000 Muscovites were poured into Lithuania.

Alexis hesitated, for he could not forget how Poland had chastised Russia during the reign of his father Michael. Urged forward, however, by the patriarch, he resolved first to seek the opinion of Heaven,



by means of a strangely superstitious appeal to it. He caused two wild bulls, one of which he named Poland, and the other Russia, to be opposed to each other in an arena, and determined to enter upon the war if the representative of his country should succeed in the strife. He had the mortification to see the brute which represented Poland triumphant; but the patriarch removed his superstitious fears, and represented to him that the interests of religion required that he should declare war against catholic Poland. But the acquisition of the vast territory the czar obtained by the submission of Bogdan, no doubt influenced the Russian potentate more than the pretended interests of the Greek church. Such was the distracted state of Poland, that success against it was a matter of comparative certainty. The Russian triumphs were rapid; and if accomplished at any other time, they might have been deemed brilliant. Smolensk, Witepsk, Polotsk, Mohilof, Severia, and Semigallia were taken by the armies of Alexis, while his Cossack ally was subjugating Haman, Bratslaw, and other fortresses on the Moldavian frontier. The doom of Poland seemed at hand; and it appeared that its independence would be crushed beneath the iron heels of the Russian and Cossack armies.

But Poland was saved from the disgrace of conquest by Russia, in consequence of the natural jealousy entertained by Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden, of the power and growth of his great northern neighbour. Charles, at the head of 60,000 Swedes, landed in Pomerania. His march was one triumphant career to the walls, first of Warsaw, and next of Cracow, which submitted without resistance. A panic seized both the nobles and people of Poland; John Casimir fled into Silesia; and the whole country, from the Carpathian mountains to the duchy of Courland, submitted to the conquering Swede.

The czar Alexis paused, and felt that the prey he had hoped to seize was thus wrested from him by another. He accused Charles Gustavus of having hindered the operations of his troops; the accusation ripened into a quarrel, and led to a fierce warfare between the Russians and the Swedes.

The irritated czar next poured his troops into Sweden, where they plundered many villages, and put the unarmed inhabitants to the sword. This was during the absence of the warlike Charles; but the Russians

soon found themselves unequal to contend with the experienced Swedish veterans, trained to service amidst the victories of the famous thirty years' war. Alexis obtained neither advantage nor credit; and he withdrew his troops, and concluded a truce for three years. It was signed on the 23rd of April, 1658; and three years after, on the 21st of June, 1661, was converted into a treaty of peace at Karelis, by which their former possessions were mutually secured to each party.

Alexis, satisfied with the military glory he had acquired in Poland, had withdrawn his troops from that distracted country. A revulsion took place in the feelings of the Poles: a resolve to make a great effort to recover their national independence succeeded the fierce religious disputes between catholic and Lutheran, which had made those involved in them almost indifferent to the claims of their country. Thousands flocked into Silesia, and rallied round the standard of their fugitive monarch. The great powers of Europe also showed themselves favourable to the cause of the Poles, from a mixed feeling of commiseration for a gallant people, and a dread of the aspiring views of the Swedish monarch. Poland rose against the king whose foot had been placed upon her neck, and, recovering her ancient spirit, defeated the troops of Charles in several engagements. It is difficult, indeed it is almost impossible, to conquer a people resolved to be free. After some severe contests, Charles thought proper to retire from Poland; his conduct being further influenced by the circumstance that Sweden itself was invaded by the King of Denmark. The war, however, lingered in Pomerania and along the shores of the Baltic until the death of Charles, when a peace was concluded between Poland and Sweden at Oliva. The only state which derived any solid advantages from all these fierce contentions was Russia. By the submission of Bogdan and the Cossacks, Alexis had obtained possession of that portion of the Ukraine which, lying on the left bank of the Dnieper, had hitherto not been included in the empire. This comprised many provinces, together with the important border fortresses. As Poland, in her enfeebled state, saw the hopelessness of attempting to recover this broad territory from the powerful grasp of Russia, the Ukraine became a part of that vast empire, and the Cossacks acknowledged the sway of the czar. Bogdan,



whose wrongs caused this revolution, and whose untiring pursuit of revenge mainly produced it, passed the remainder of his life in tranquillity, and went to his grave in the course of nature—a somewhat remarkable circumstance, when we consider how few public men in these turbulent times escaped a violent death.

Peace was welcome to Russia; for the wounds which anarchy had inflicted upon her were yet scarcely healed. Her commerce was much depressed, and her treasury nearly exhausted. The silver money had almost disappeared from circulation, and Alexis caused copper, of the same nominal value, to be coined and put in circulation. This depreciated money was received with readiness, until the court itself destroyed the confidence of the people in it, by its greedy efforts to secure all the sterling money, and leave only the new coin for the use of commerce. It fell rapidly in public estimation, and great general distress ensued. Distress led to discontent, and in 1662 a rebellion broke out at Moscow. No attempt was made to pacify the poor ignorant people, but the disaffection was extinguished with a severity amounting to savage fury. The rioters who were captured were hanged or drowned by hundreds; and others were punished with torture or mutilation. It is estimated that the number who suffered death, in consequence of this arbitrary alteration of the currency, amounted to upwards of 7,000; while 15,000 more wretched victims were tortured or maimed.

But Alexis, though merciless in his mode of government, was by no means indifferent to the prosperity of the empire. He courted every opportunity which offered itself of forming or strengthening connections with the courts of Europe—a wise policy, which led to the introduction into Russia of foreign arts and manufactures. With a natural and not altogether ungraceful sympathy, he offered kindnesses to the worthless fugitive Charles Stuart, and sent a special ambassador to congratulate him on his accession to the English throne. Charles II. reciprocated these civilities, and proposed a commercial treaty between England and Russia; but this was declined by Alexis, on account of its not being sufficiently favourable to the interests of his nation.

Whether Alexis saw the necessity which his famous son Peter eventually so powerfully felt, of extending the boundaries of Russia until they reached the sea, we are

unable to say. It is not an improbable assumption, that he felt convinced that an outlet to the sea and a considerable navy was necessary, not only to the commerce, but also to the greatness of Russia. This idea naturally presents itself to the mind, when we learn that the two first Russian vessels that ever were built, were constructed under the personal superintendence of the czar Alexis. Certainly he was an observant and reflective man, and he strove to excite among his subjects a desire for progress and the arts of civilisation. On all questions of great public interest, he called the states-general together to assist him with their counsels. This circumstance, so adverse to the spirit of despotism, showed a desire to bestow upon the people something approaching to a representative voice in the affairs of state. But the peculiar circumstances of the empire, its vast extent of territory, and the fluctuations to which it was exposed, both from within and without, discouraged this advance in the direction of popular government, and caused it to be abandoned.

Russia was not long permitted to enjoy the repose so requisite to the development of her prosperity. The Cossacks of the Don had been treated with harshness and injustice—a circumstance which led to insubordination amongst them. Several of them were put to death—an act of severity which produced great irritation in the minds of these turbulent men. Stenka Radzin, a brother of one of the victims, instigated his countrymen to revolt, and offered himself as their leader. They placed themselves under his banner, with the avowed objects of revenging the past, and securing their liberties for the future; though no doubt can be entertained that many of them were animated only by a hope of plunder. This was so well known to Radzin, that he lured great numbers, not only of Cossacks, but of discontented Russians, to him by a promise of piratical expeditions on the Caspian, and on the Persian shores of that sea, where it was supposed that great wealth might be gained at the point of the sword. Other Russians were won to join the insurrection by a promise of the immediate redress of all popular grievances. Radzin also denominated the nobles as the enemies of the people; and he even had the audacity to give out, that the czar felt himself so powerless against the factious conduct of the selfish grandees, that he had applied to him for the



means of crushing them. Such was the success of these expedients, that the rebel Cossack found himself the leader of a promiscuous army of 200,000 men.

Radzin commenced operations by seizing a fleet of boats belonging to the czar, while on its way to the city of Astracan; of which province he talked of making himself the sovereign. With these boats he descended into the Caspian, the shores of which were ruthlessly plundered by him and his companions. Though the rebels were rather banditti than soldiers—irregularly armed, and influenced more by a desire for spoil than bound together by anything which deserved the name of a principle—yet they possessed themselves of Astracan in 1670, and became really a formidable body. For three years was Radzin enabled to continue his wild career of insurrection and plunder; during which period he repeatedly defeated the forces sent against him. At length he received so severe a check, that he promised to lay down his arms, on condition that a pardon was given both to himself and his followers. The general who had brought him to bay, knowing that the Cossack was still formidable if driven to desperation, accepted these terms, and they were confirmed by the czar. The Cossacks and other rebels were permitted to return to their homes with the plunder they had acquired, and it seemed as if the insurrection was at an end.

This was not the case. Either in consequence of his own restless nature, or from a suspicion that treachery was intended towards him, Radzin was soon at his piratical employment again, at the head of a great body of his old followers. The banks of the Volga were swept by them with reckless audacity, and numerous instances of infamous cruelty occurred. As before, he raised the cry of liberty and the natural rights of man; and the oppressed and discontented crowded to his aid. Even large numbers of the soldiers murdered their officers, and joined a leader who, to such popular war-cries, combined an unlimited license to plunder. Had Radzin been a man of comprehensive talents, and fitted by nature to be the leader of a great popular movement, he might have revolutionised Russia. He had no such qualities, and was altogether unable to direct the power he raised. In fact, the extent of his own success awed him: he did not understand the next step; and feeling the peril of his own position,

feared to perish in the storm which, wizard-like, he had created. In the very height of his power, he was snared by an assurance that the czar desired to see the famous chief of the Don Cossacks in the capital, where he would, in admiration of his boldness, again extend to him a pardon. The delusion would have been seen through by a man of ordinary intelligence; but Radzin, flattered by what he regarded as so great a distinction, was deceived and entrapped by it. His friends urged him not to go; and represented that, even if treachery was not intended, the czar had perhaps not made the promise attributed to him. Regardless of remonstrances, the devoted man pressed thoughtlessly and eagerly forward towards the pit that had been dug to engulf him. As he approached Moscow, he beheld a gallows on a cart, which had been sent forward to meet him as a prognostic of his fate. Whether it was too late to recede, or that he was blinded by infatuation, we cannot say; but he still went on, and entered the city. No sooner had he done so, than he was seized, and shortly afterwards expiated his crimes upon the scaffold. After his departure from Astracan, it was invested and taken by the Russian troops: a great number of his followers perished beneath the swords of their assailants; while no less than 12,000 of them were subsequently gibbeted on the high roads of the disturbed districts. This terrible severity struck awe into the rebels; the wild dreams of liberty of some, and the habits of plunder of others, were abandoned; the storm of insurrection subsided, and peace was restored in the district of the Ukraine; but in many places it was the peace of desolation and of the charnel-house.

Another war was impending. Turkey beheld with emotions of jealousy the extending territory and power of Russia. The recent subjugation of the Cossacks placed a barrier between the great northern empire and the dominions of the sultan, which Mohammed IV. considered it expedient to remove. The Saporogian Cossacks, led by their hetman Dorensensky, had revolted against the Poles, and made a treaty of alliance with the sultan. This circumstance naturally led to a dispute between Poland and Turkey; and the haughty Porte, used to conquest, conceived the bold design of first crushing Poland, and then descending upon Russia.

Mohammed poured a Moslem army of



80,000 men into Poland, where he was bravely withstood by the heroic John Sobieski, at the head of a force not amounting to a fourth part of that of the invaders. Yet the ultimate success of Turkey was evident, unless assistance was given to Poland. Alexis was bound, both by treaty and by a wise policy, to assist the Poles against an enemy dreaded by all Christendom. He was further induced to oppose himself to the great representative of Mohammedanism by a haughty message he received from the sultan, requiring him to evacuate his possessions in the Ukraine. The sultan, in his communication, treated Alexis as if he had been only a Christian hospodar, while, with Asiatic vanity, he entitled himself "Most glorious majesty, king of the world." The answer of the czar was a memorable one, and sternly indicative of the growing power as well as reputation of the vast empire he governed. The message he returned was, that "he was above submitting to a Mohammedan dog; but that his sabre was as good as the grand seignor's scimitar."

Not only did Alexis prepare for war, but he endeavoured to create a Christian league against the Turks. With this object he sent ambassadors to the pope and to almost all the great sovereigns in Europe, except France, which was in alliance with Turkey: but the monarchs of Europe were fully occupied with their own quarrels and interests, and were, consequently, not disposed to give anything but their good wishes.

The exertions of the Russians were forestalled by the unexpected and brilliant success of the Poles. Sobieski—now raised to the throne of Poland, after having, at the head of only 10,000 men, opposed the Turks, who had an army, raised by reinforcements to 300,000—at length, on the morning of the 14th of October, 1676, had the audacity to lead his followers from their intrenchments, and offer battle to the overwhelming hosts before them! The Turks were not only astonished, but a superstitious fear fell upon them. They could not believe that ordinary men could be capable of such reckless and seemingly hopeless daring. They declared that the Poles were assisted by magic, that their leader was Sheitan, or the devil, and that it was useless to fight against them. The Turkish pasha, though above this superstition, knew the debilitating influence it would have upon his troops; and knowing, also, that Polish succours were

approaching, he offered an honourable peace, which Sobieski was glad enough to accept. Though not victory, it was at least triumph, and won for the brave Polish monarch the admiration of Europe.

Before this event occurred, the czar Alexis was no more. He died on the 10th of February, 1676, in the forty-sixth year of his age, and the thirty-first of his reign. His death was hastened by the ignorance of an old woman, to whose medical skill he trusted in preference to that of his physicians; at least the latter said so, though if he had died while under their treatment, it would have been discovered that nature had succumbed to the resistless force of the disease.

Alexis was mourned for by his subjects, and in some respects he deserved this honourable tribute to his memory. The fault of most of the sovereigns of the house of Romanoff was want of heart, or of that becoming gentleness which, in those who hold the issues of life and death, tempers the severity of justice with the sweetness of mercy. From this Alexis was not exempt; and though not wantonly cruel, yet he crushed opposition and insurrection with a severity that bore an aspect of vindictiveness and brutality. Certainly the barbarous people whom he ruled did not seem to understand any other mode of correction: but it was not tried with them. Yet, setting aside the exercise of an unnecessary severity, which must be regarded as a vice of the times, Alexis was an able and an estimable prince. His prudence and his firmness consolidated the throne of the empire, and bound up deep wounds which, though closing, were far from being healed. Though not deficient in the qualities of the warrior, yet his courage was balanced by a sagacious statesmanship which counselled him to moderation and prudence. One noble point of his character must not be forgotten: he abolished the inhuman custom by which, in Russia, all prisoners taken in war were consigned to slavery. He felt that brave men ought not to be punished for serving their sovereign; and all military captives he sent into the uncultivated parts of the empire, for the purpose of colonising those remote districts. He never lost sight of the improvement of his country, and devoted himself especially to the promotion of agriculture and manufactures. He induced many foreigners of ability to settle in Russia, and treated them with great libe-



rality. In the same spirit, he caused works on mathematics, military science, tactics, fortification, geography, and other valuable subjects, to be translated into the Russian language. He introduced important reforms in the laws, and attempted others in the church. The city of Moscow was enlarged, and two suburbs built by him. His attention was also turned to ship-building; but in this direction he only commenced a work which was left for a greater man to carry out. He was twice married. By his first

wife, Maria Iljinishna Miloflaskoi, he had two sons and four daughters; though some writers say six, and others seven: his second wife, Natolia Kirillowna Narishkin, brought him one son and one daughter—the former being Peter Alexeiewitz, afterwards so famous as to acquire the title of Peter the Great. We may briefly sum up the character of Alexis, by quoting the judgment of a distinguished writer concerning him; that is, that he was worthy of being the father of so distinguished a son.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ACCESSION OF FEODOR; HE EXECUTES MINOR REFORMS; HIS BENEVOLENCE; HE ABOLISHES THE MESTNICHSTVO; HIS MARRIAGE AND DEATH; AMBITION OF THE PRINCESS SOPHIA, AND REVOLT OF THE STRELITZ; IVAN AND PETER ARE CROWNED AS JOINT SOVEREIGN; SOPHIA BECOMES REGENT; REBELLION OF KOVANSKOI; UNSUCCESSFUL WAR WITH THE TARTARS OF THE CRIMEA; THE BOYHOOD OF PETER; HIS MARRIAGE; SOPHIA ENDEAVOURS TO PROCURE THE ASSASSINATION OF PETER; HE COMPELS HER TO ABDICATE THE REGENCY, AND RETIRE INTO A CONVENT; PETER BECOMES SOLE SOVEREIGN.

FEODOR, the eldest son of Alexis, was, at the time of his father's death, only nineteen years of age. Some objections were urged against his succeeding to the throne, on account of the extreme delicacy or feebleness of his constitution. These objections would have had more force if they had not proceeded from the Narishkins, the family of the second wife of the late czar, who were extremely anxious to place the infant Peter, then only three years of age, on the throne instead of Feodor; who, it was pretended, was weak in intellect as well as in bodily frame. Ivan, the brother of Feodor, was undoubtedly almost imbecile; but the subsequent acts of the latter showed him to possess considerable mental power, in conjunction with a resolute will.

Alexis had bequeathed to his successor one dangerous legacy, namely, his dispute with Turkey on the subject of the territory of the Ukraine, and the sovereignty over the Cossacks of that region. Neither empire cared to prolong, or rather to enter upon, an active state of hostilities; and three years after the accession of Feodor, an armistice, which was to last for twenty years, was entered into between the Porte and the czar, by which the contested territory was surrendered to the latter.

Feodor, young as he was, entered with avidity upon the task of promoting the civilisation of the empire. This he forwarded by the minute attention he paid to the administration of its internal affairs. That of justice particularly occupied his attention; and he laboured hard to extirpate the corruption which infected its decisions. Then, and unhappily even now—for the villanous practice has lasted from that time to the present—the verdicts of judges were given, or rather sold, to the litigant who bribed the highest. It is said, in apology for this gigantic evil, that judges and other highly responsible officials are paid so small a sum, that men of high position and irreproachable character will not accept such positions, and that the dishonesty of those who do, is consequently winked at by the imperial government. The statement as to the insufficiency of remuneration is at least correct; for we have already stated, that at the present time, the highest legal functionaries of Russia receive only £160 a-year! Bribery, or the acceptance of presents, as it is termed by the Russians, is therefore almost a necessary consequence among a people where the tone of public morality is by no means a high one. We may be allowed to question









TRAVEL IN A DESERT



SCALE











the sincerity, or at least the earnestness, of the government in its endeavours to extinguish this vile trading in that which should be above all price, because it has never adopted the most evident means of putting an end to it; that is, the awarding of such stipends to those who administer the law, as to place them at least beyond the cares of poverty and its accompanying temptations. The Russian peasants have a proverb which expresses their conviction of the difficulty of obtaining justice. They say, "God is in heaven, and the czar is far off." That is, that both are so above them, and so inaccessible to their approach, that they must submit to oppression with patience. Nikolay Gogol, a Russian author of the present century, who has acquired great celebrity, and occupies, in the literature of the northern empire, a position something resembling that of Mr. Charles Dickens in the literature of England, wrote a comedy on the subject of judicial corruption, called *The Revisor*, which not only met with the most brilliant success, but was witnessed more than once by the late emperor Nicholas, who gave it his marked applause. A revisor, in Russia, is the title of a high government officer, dispatched to a province to ascertain and report on the character of its administration. The plot and moral of the play is, that an impostor who makes his appearance at a provincial capital, assuming this title, finds such universal peculation and misconduct among all the government officials, that when he is at last discovered, they are glad to let him off scot-free, and hush up the whole affair.

To return from this momentary digression. The young czar Feodor found the task he had undertaken was too great for him. He did not remove the cause (probably did not recognise it), and the effect remained. The underpaid and crafty judges devised ways to evade his enactments; and all he found it expedient to do, was to punish flagrant cases with severity. The young among the wealthy are seldom thoughtful of the poor; but Feodor gave much of his attention to their sufferings, and the mode of alleviating them. With more of philanthropy, perhaps, than wisdom, he caused the price of provisions to be regulated by what was regarded as an equitable standard, and made enactments with the object of preventing the dealers in such commodities from oppressing the indigent. He even took such a kindly interest in the

affairs of the people, as to lend sums of money to small tradesmen and ingenious artisans, to assist them in their business, and received the payment in small instalments. He reformed the police arrangements of Moscow, and gave attention to many matters which, though they generally escape the observation of princes, yet do much towards constituting the contentment and prosperity of a people.

One reform Feodor accomplished which made his name memorable. It was the abolition of a troublesome custom, called *Mestnichestvo* or *placship*, from *Mesto*, place. Every family amongst the nobility kept a book containing its genealogy; and pride of ancestry was carried to an extent that caused many inconveniences and quarrels. No nobleman would serve in a post subordinate to another whose ancestry had stood at any time in an inferior position to his progenitors. As the genealogical books contained an account of all the positions held at any time by those mentioned in them, it was easy for a discontented boyard to find out at once what had been the appointments of the ancestors of any rival who was raised to some position above him. This folly was carried to such lengths, that it seriously interfered with the progress of public business, being a source of incessant discords. A public office had been instituted at Moscow, in which exact copies of the genealogical table and service-register were deposited. Feodor consulted with his minister, Prince Vassili Galitzin, on the best means of putting an end to this pride-engendered confusion; and they soon devised a curious and rather dramatic expedient.

The czar issued a proclamation, requiring that all noble families should deliver into court faithful copies of their service-rolls, that certain errors might be erased from them. The command was obeyed; and at the appointed time the czar, the patriarch, the superior clergy, and the nobles were assembled together. The patriarch, who had been informed concerning the real object of the meeting, first delivered an animated address against the *Mestnichestvo* and the jealousies and inconveniences caused by it. These prerogatives, said he in conclusion, "are a bitter source of every kind of evil; they render abortive the most useful enterprises, in like manner as the tares stifle the good grain; they have introduced, even into the heart of families, dis-



sensions, confusions, and hatred; but the pontiff comprehends the grand design of his czar. God alone can have inspired it!" The nobles expressed their satisfaction at the yet unrevealed intention, by the utterance of servile acclamations, in the midst of which Feodor proposed, that all the papers relative to the positions they or their ancestors had held, should be at once burnt, in order that the feuds arising from them might be altogether forgotten. The nobles were extremely unwilling; but their assent had been given, and could not readily be recalled. The records were thrown into a fire, prepared in the courtyard of the palace, and soon reduced to ashes. In conclusion, the patriarch pronounced an anathema against every one who presumed to contravene this ordinance of the czar; and the humbled nobles joined the rest of the assembly in a response of "Amen." The importance of this reform, and the difficulties in the way of accomplishing it, may be inferred from the fact, that Ivan the Terrible, who had deluged Russia with blood and decimated its nobility, was unable to abolish the *Mestnichestvo*. That it might not be supposed that he was inimical to an order of nobility, Feodor ordered a new set of books to be made, in which the names and rank of the noble families were duly inserted; but the old distinctions, arising from the accidental occupation of place, were altogether abolished.

Even in such a circumstance as his marriage, the young czar exhibited his thoughtfulness and his care for the prosperity and enlightenment of the empire. It was the custom for the Russian czars always to marry a subject; as it was said such a practice shut out of the empire the evils of foreign influence. This might be the case; but it also excluded the benefits of foreign alliances, and checked that intercourse between nations so productive of the extension of civilisation, and of which Russia stood so pre-eminently in need. Besides this, a peculiar honour was conferred upon the family from whose circle the consort of the czar was selected, which commonly encouraged ambitious views in it, and excited a feeling of jealous irritation against it on the part of the other nobles. In cases also where the sovereign married twice, it created rival factions, whose animosities might disturb the peace of the country. An incident of the latter kind was observable when Feodor ascended the throne,

and the Narishkin family, the relations of the second czarina, endeavoured, on the false plea of his being of feeble intellect, to set him aside in favour of the infant Peter. In the event of their being successful, the Narishkins would have enjoyed the chief offices and emoluments of the state, which, as they failed, were probably to no small extent filled by the members of the house of Miloflafskoi, a daughter of the head of which was the mother of Feodor.

These considerations induced the czar to resolve upon not selecting a consort from the daughters of the Russian nobles, but to look abroad for a partner of his crown and bed. Probably a more personal and immediate motive also influenced him; for he chose a Polish lady for whom, we learn, he had conceived a passionate attachment. The nobles objected to the match; and those who had marriageable daughters were, we may not unfairly presume, decidedly adverse to a departure from old customs. But the chief opposition came from the clergy, who nevertheless uttered remonstrances, warnings, and anathemas in vain. Feodor replied that he should marry the lady of his choice, whether the church approved of it or otherwise; and marry her he did—a circumstance which we are sure that our lady readers, at least, will not censure him for.

Feodor endeavoured to withdraw the people from many prejudices, and pernicious or barbarous habits. His reign was too brief to permit of any great success in this direction; for it takes years, and sometimes even generations, to effect changes in national customs. To vulgar minds it is a sufficient reason for anything, that their fathers and forefathers did it. So strongly does this feeling—a wholesome one under proper restrictions—influence the Russian peasantry, that even to this day they can scarcely be induced to adopt agricultural improvements. Their ancestors followed a plan which, with greater labour, yielded a smaller produce; and they will do as their ancestors did. Inertness of mind and constitutional apathy has much to do in bringing about this obstructive temper in a people; and the Russian peasant was, and is, notoriously idle and unreflective. Feodor tried hard to raise the people from their slothful ways, and to show them the value of intellectual energy. It is very possible that his exertions softened the severity of the subsequent labours of Peter in the same



path; indeed, but for his premature death, he might have accomplished much of what was eventually effected by his illustrious half-brother. It is somewhat remarkable, that he endeavoured to reform the common dress of the people, and to induce them to adopt a costume resembling that worn by the inhabitants of other European nations, instead of one of an Asiatic character.

The reign of this amiable and wise young czar was a very brief one. It extended over a period of six years only; when his feeble constitution sunk under some disorder, and he died early in 1682, at the age of twenty-five. During the time he held the sceptre, he accomplished a considerable amount of good in those small matters which bring more benefit to the people than reputation to the sovereign. His was the work of preparation; and he proved himself a worthy forerunner of the national regenerator who was to effect that which he had laid his hand upon. Reformer as he was, the Russians regretted their young czar, and mourned his death. Though they disapproved of many of his designs, they were conscious that he laboured earnestly in the cause of his country.

Feodor, shortly before his death, appointed his half-brother Peter to succeed to the empire; for he knew that the infirmities of Ivan were such as to prevent the possibility of his discharging the duties of the government. The unhappy boy, besides being of defective intellect, was subject to epileptic fits, and nearly blind. Sensible of his own unfitness for a post of such serious responsibility, Ivan readily consented to the proposition of Feodor, and resigned a crown, the weight of which he had not strength to bear.

The princess Sophia, a sister of Ivan's, distinguished alike for her beauty, her ambition, and her reckless want of principle, was much incensed at this arrangement. It was her desire that Ivan should succeed to the throne, that she might be able to rule through the instrumentality of her feeble brother. The members of the house of Miloflaskoi, or the family of the mother of Ivan, were all ready to second any scheme she might conceive for that purpose; while the Narishkins, the family of Peter, were equally as ready to oppose it. Much excitement was produced by this division in the imperial family; and adherents to both parties arose in every quarter of the city.

The Miloflaskois had the advantage that arose from the possession of authority. The officers of state were in their confidence, the keys of power in their hands, and the bands of the Strelitz under their command, or at least nominally so; for these turbulent and ferocious troops were scarcely to be controlled by any power in the state. The designing Sophia resolved to make these men the instruments of her approach to power. She addressed herself to them even before Feodor had breathed his last, and pleaded in behalf of her brother Ivan; knowing, that if this poor puppet was placed upon the throne, she would have the field to herself, and could do as she pleased. It is said, that her beauty made a great impression upon the Strelitz; but it is more likely that her influence arose solely from the bribes which she scattered amongst them with great liberality. Within two days after the funeral of Feodor, the Strelitz assembled in arms to the number of 14,000, and proceeded in a body to the Kremlin. They had received their instructions; which were, in the tumult of insurrection to assassinate the chief members of the Narishkin family, and to take, if possible, the life of the young prince Peter. To give a false colour to their objects, a report was spread throughout the city, that the Narishkins had poisoned Feodor to make way for Peter; that some foreign physicians had been the guilty agents; and that a similar act of treachery was contemplated towards Ivan.

On arriving at the Kremlin, the Strelitz broke out into insurrection. They began by accusing nine of their colonels of defrauding them of their pay, and demanding the sums that had been taken from them, and that the nine officers should be given up to them. Both demands were complied with, and the defaulters subjected to the punishment of the bastinado. Subordination once broken, furious excesses soon followed. These were encouraged by the princess Sophia, who had given to the chiefs of the Strelitz a list of forty nobles, whom she declared to be enemies of the state, and deserving of death. Forcing their way into the palace, the Strelitz demanded the lives of the Narishkins. The princes Dolgorouki and Maffeof were the first victims. These unfortunate men were thrown out of the windows of the palace by the Strelitz, and received on the pikes of



their comrades beneath. Athanasius Narishkin, a brother of the widow of the czar Alexis, and uncle of Peter, was also murdered, together with most of those denounced by the fierce and ambitious Sophia. Three of the proscribed were dragged from the altar of a neighbouring church, stripped naked, and then cut to pieces. In their fury, the ruffian soldiers murdered a young nobleman, by mistake, for one of the uncles of Peter, of whom they were in search. When the deed was done, they discovered they had slain a member of the house of Soltikof, who, so far from incurring their vengeance, had ever been a great favourite with them. To show their regret, they respectfully carried the body of the young noble to his father, who, influenced by fear, gave them a considerable reward for so doing. The ladies of his household reproached him for his weakness. "Let us wait," responded the bereaved noble, "for an opportunity of being revenged." The retiring soldiers overheard the words, and returning, they dragged the aged man by the hair into the street, and cut his throat at his own door.

A Dutch physician named Daniel Vongad, had been accused of poisoning the czar Feodor—a crime of which the unfortunate man was undoubtedly innocent. While searching for Vongad, they met his son, and murdered him, because he would not inform them where his father was. Shortly afterwards, a German physician fell into their hands, and was instantly put to death by these ruffians; who said to him, "You are a doctor; and if you have not poisoned our master Feodor, you have poisoned others, and therefore you merit death."

Vongad was at length discovered, concealed in the palace in the disguise of a beggar. The princesses (sisters of the remorseless Sophia) implored the soldiers to spare him, assuring them that he was a very skilful man, and had taken great care of their brother Feodor. The wretches, thirsting for blood, replied, that he deserved to be put to death for sorcery; for that they had found the skeleton of a large toad, and the skin of a snake, in his cabinet. Having discovered John Narishkin, another brother of the mother of Peter, they put him and the poor physician to a mock trial, and condemned them to be cut to pieces. After the execution of this savage sentence, the heads, feet, and hands of the two victims were exposed upon the iron points of

a balustrade of the palace. Happily the mother of Peter escaped with that young prince from this scene of horror. She fled with her boy in her arms; but the Strelitz were soon upon her track. When almost exhausted, she could hear the yells of her pursuers and the tramp of their feet. She had just time to gain the sanctuary of the convent of the Trinity, and to place her child upon the altar, when two of the ruffians entered. One of them seized the prince, and raised his weapon to dispatch the boy. At this moment, a noise of horsemen, joined, perhaps, to a feeling of superstitious terror, caused him to hesitate. A strange panic had fallen upon his comrades in the other part of the church; it extended itself to him: the ruffian released the prince, and fled; and the future regenerator of Russia was saved.

The result of all this violence was, that the feeble Ivan was declared czar. The poor boy shrunk from a responsibility to which he felt himself unequal, and desired that his half-brother, Peter, might be associated with him in the government. This proposition was considered reasonable, and brought about a compromise. The partisans of the princess Sophia thought it prudent to consent; and on the 6th of May, 1682, Ivan and Peter were crowned as joint sovereign, she herself being appointed as regent. The ambitious princess, though thus in possession of the imperial power, was not satisfied without being recognised as ruler in name as well as in fact. She enjoyed all the honours of sovereignty; her features were stamped upon the public coin, she signed all despatches, had the first seat in the council, and enjoyed an authority which knew no control.

To preserve the power of the sceptre in her own family, she married her brother Ivan to a young lady of the house of Soltikof. The way in which the consort of the czar was selected at this period, was remarkable and romantic. Voltaire observes, that on these occasions it seems as if we were reading the history of Ahasuerus, or that of Theodosius the younger. The ceremony was conducted according to Asiatic precedents. The most beautiful girls of the country were diligently sought for, and when a sufficient number were collected, they were invited to the palace, and dressed in their most costly apparel. Each had an apartment provided for her, but they dined together at a general table.



On these occasions, the czar attended either publicly or *incognito*, and had an opportunity of comparing their beauty, and listening to their conversation. Some authors assert, that he watched them upon other and unsuspected occasions, and even sometimes visited their chambers at night, to see which of them slept quietest. When he had made his selection, he presented the chosen lady with a handkerchief and a ring, as tokens of his affection and acceptance of her. The rest were honourably dismissed with presents, and returned to their respective homes. The chosen beauty was then declared in public, and had the title of grand princess conferred upon her.

Having induced her brother Ivan to marry, Sophia sent Peter to an obscure village, where, by causing his education to be neglected, and surrounding him with low companions, she trusted to render him unfit to attain and direct the powers of the state. Thus, with two czars upon the throne, the one almost an idiot, the other a mere child, the regent Sophia might have been an absolute sovereign but for other difficulties which arose in her path. Men's minds were unsettled, and a fresh insurrection broke out. The Strelitz were especially turbulent. They first broke into rebellion on the subject of religion; and, in defence of some new doctrine, drove the patriarch and his clergy from the cathedral with stones. After much confusion this outbreak was subdued, the leaders beheaded, and the soldiers pacified or intimidated.

But the Strelitz did not long remain quiet; they felt that they had given the sceptre into the hands of Sophia, and that she could not sufficiently repay them for such an important service. Like the prætorian guards of the Roman emperors, they assumed the right of dethroning as well as enthroning; and the regent soon became sensible that she must awe them into submission, or become merely a slavish instrument of their desires. Prince Kovanskoi, their commander, had been the confidant of the ambitious princess, and was necessarily in possession of dangerous secrets. At first he appears to have been merely jealous of the superior ascendancy of Prince Basil Galatzin, the favourite and lover of the princess, whom she had created generalissimo, minister of state, and lord-keeper. Soon, however, he enlarged the horizon of his ambition, and even aimed at the imperial dignity. With this view he proposed

to the regent, that she should marry one of her sisters to his son. The acute princess suspected the design of Kovanskoi, and returned a haughty refusal. Irritated by her reply, he resolved on revenge, and determined to clear a path to the throne by the murder of the two czars, Sophia, and all who were attached to the imperial family.

At the instigation of Kovanskoi, the turbulent Strelitz again broke out into insurrection. On this occasion, also, the name of religion was perverted into an excuse for outrage. The soldiers demanded certain changes, but the object of their chief was merely ambitious. Moscow was thrown into a state of confusion; and the czars and the princesses having no power at hand to oppose the insurgents, fled to the fortified monastery of the Trinity, within twelve leagues of the capital. This retreat was at once a convent, a palace, and a fortress; and was encompassed with deep ditches and brick ramparts, on which were planted a numerous artillery. Enconced within these walls, the imperial party prepared to defend themselves to the last extremity.

Prince Kovanskoi possessed far more ambition than talent; and he soon showed that he was no match for the crafty princess against whom he had conspired. She opened a negotiation, and having prevailed upon him to meet her half-way, she came to the spot with a considerable body of soldiers, and seizing Kovanskoi and the thirty-seven Strelitz who attended him, caused them to be instantly beheaded. The rebels were furious on learning the fate of their leader, and advanced upon the monastery, threatening death to everyone within it. While they were approaching, they received information that troops were marching on all sides against them; and their fury was succeeded, first by fear, and next by an absolute panic. Taking advantage of this, the regent, reassured by the assistance that was at hand, demanded that all the ring-leaders should be delivered up to her, and that every tenth man in each regiment should also be surrendered as a security for the behaviour of the rest. The dispirited rebels at once complied, and the selected victims having taken leave of their wives and families, went in a long melancholy procession to the monastery. Two-thirds of the number carried blocks; while the remainder bore axes—the intended instruments of their own execution. On arriving at the open space in front of the building,



they laid their heads upon the blocks they had brought with them, and passively awaited their doom. The court and the spectators were touched by this exhibition of abject submission. The most guilty only were put to death; while the rest were pardoned and distributed among the frontier regiments.

This last was the act of the prince Galitzin, who sent the most mutinous corps of the Strelitz into the Ukraine, Kasan, and Siberia. Sophia, who now recovered the regal power, was fortunate in the possession of this man as her minister. The Polish envoy then in Russia described him as superior, in every respect, to any other person in that tempestuous court—as being not only polite, but magnificent; full of grand designs, and learned beyond any of his countrymen; being a master of the Latin tongue, at that time almost unknown in Russia—a man of an active spirit, of indefatigable application; in short, a genius superior to the times he lived in, and capable, had he leisure and power as he had inclination, of reforming the manners of Russia.

The partisans of the young czar Peter, discerning in him some touches of mental vigour, lived in hopes of eventually securing for him the sole power of the state. With this object they watched anxiously for an opportunity of weakening the regent Sophia, and of bringing her minister, Galitzin, into disgrace.

It was known that Galitzin had more talent for the cabinet than for the field; and for this reason his enemies clamoured for a war with the Tartars of the Crimea, who still exacted from Russia an annual tribute of 60,000 roubles. Such a condition was very humiliating to Russia; but, under the circumstances, with an unsettled government, and an almost exhausted treasury, it was not prudent to enter upon a war. Yet the Narishkin faction induced Galitzin to take the field, in the year 1687, at the head of the army, with the hope that a disaster might prove his ruin; or that, at least during his absence, they might more effectually advance the claims of Peter.

The army is said to have amounted to 300,000 men; but they were undisciplined and ill-armed. Galitzin was, moreover, encumbered with an enormous quantity of baggage, and he wasted the strength of his men in marches and counter-marches, which failed to produce any equivalent results. The war was prolonged over two campaigns,

attended with a loss of 40,000 soldiers, and ended without victory. The enemies of Galitzin had calculated correctly: the unsuccessful general incurred general odium, from which the regent Sophia by no means escaped.

In the meantime Peter grew up towards manhood in his retirement. Left as far as possible without education, the regent had placed around him a number of dissolute young Russians, many of whom were mere adventurers, who, though but lads in years, possessed the vices of men, and had become reckless of honour, and even of reputation. Sophia naturally supposed that Peter would sink to the level of this depraved set, and never afterwards rise above it. She was both right and wrong: partly right, because Peter imbibed from these dissolute lads evil habits which never left him; and partly wrong, because she had not recognised in her half-brother the originality of character and firmness of will that led him to attain an ascendancy over them. He acquired their vices; but he attracted both their affection and esteem. Much of their time was passed in those profligate amusements to which Peter ever remained attached; but the military taste of the young czar soon became apparent, and he formed his companions into a corps of soldiers. In this mimic military community he set an example of discipline himself, by entering the ranks first as a drummer, and becoming successively a private soldier, an officer, and, finally, commander of the troop. While engaged in these instructive sports, Peter erected fortifications, and himself wheeled the earth from the trenches in a barrow constructed by his own hands. The spirit of the thing was contagious, and in a short time the whole village became a sort of military school. But the time of the young czar was not wholly occupied in this manner. Amongst his companions was a young Genevese, named François Lefort, who, having quitted his father's house at the age of fourteen, had, after many vicissitudes, entered the military service of Russia during the reign of the czar Feodor, and greatly distinguished himself against the Tartars. At length he obtained an introduction to the czar Peter, who took a liking to him, and engaged him to be one of his companions, or amusers, as they were called. Lefort was a self-educated man, and not deeply versed in literature, the arts, or the military sciences. But young as he was, he had seen the world,



and profited by what he had seen. Though not deep, he was versatile, and possessed very agreeable manners. He was something of a linguist also, and not unacquainted with mathematics; and it was under his instructions that Peter made a rapid progress in the elementary branches of literature and science. Probably the irregular genius of the young czar would have revolted against the drudgery of a systematic education; but information thus acquired by snatches, and to some extent by stealth, possessed an air of fascination extremely attractive to him.

Sophia beheld with pleasure her half-brother occupied with dissipated and seemingly boyish pursuits. The military displays of his troops she regarded as the idle frolics of boys, and fancied that the midnight carousals and premature habits of the young czar, would, in a few years, induce a bodily and mental weakness which would render him incapable of governing. She was deceived. Peter, though dissolute, was not wholly so: though his education had been purposely neglected, his great natural capacity enabled him to acquire and digest every useful information that came in his way. A sense of the dignity and responsibility of the position that was withheld from him, crossed his mind, or rather penetrated it, and dwelt there. Though his position was such as a boy might submit to, yet a man could not endure it without shame. Animated by a hope of obtaining the reality of that sceptre of which he and Ivan scarcely touched the shadow, and encouraged by his friends, he made his appearance occasionally in the city of Moscow, and also in the senate, where he took his seat by the side of his feeble-minded brother. Such was the state of affairs, when, in the June of 1689, the friends of Peter brought about a marriage between him and Eudoxia Federowna Lapuchin, the daughter of a Russian noble. This union was intended not only to allure Peter from the dissipation to which he was so much addicted, but also to defeat the scheme of the princess Sophia with respect to Ivan's wife, who was supposed to have sullied the purity of the marriage bed, and to be in a state of criminal pregnancy.

The decided bearing of Peter in the senate startled Sophia, who saw that she had been deceived in her estimate of his mental powers. Several contentions took place between them; and each recognised in the

other an enemy whom it was necessary to remove. Accounts of the promising character of Peter had gone abroad, and he was gaining ground in popular favour. Sophia felt that her choice lay between some immediate and desperate step, and her speedy removal from the power she had usurped. So remorseless a woman probably felt no compunction in consequence of the resolution at which she arrived, which was, to procure the assassination of her rival. She appears to have been steeled to this base purpose by an open quarrel, of a serious kind, which took place between them. On the occasion of some religious festival, Sophia insisted on attending as regent, or, according to some authorities, as czarina. We should presume the latter to be the case, as the regency of the princess had been long admitted, and Peter had never questioned it. On this occasion he vehemently denied her claim, and an angry altercation was the result. The imperious Sophia, accustomed to command, and more irritated than convinced by the expostulations of the young czar, persisted in her pretensions. As there was no umpire to whom the quarrel could be referred for decision, Peter withdrew from the ceremony, and protested, in the name of the sovereign power, against an act of assumption on the part of the princess, which he regarded as an usurpation.

Once again Sophia resorted to the Strelitz as the instruments of her vengeance; and a body of 600 of these desperate men was sent during the night to the residence of Peter, with orders to seize or dispatch him. The friends of the young czar were on the alert: he had received information of the murderous design against him, and had secretly left the city, and retired to the fortified monastery of the Trinity. There he summoned all the nobles of his party and the friends of Russia, and entreated their assistance to set aside an oppressive usurpation. His call was generally responded to, for the Russians are remarkably "orthodox" in their devotion to the true sovereign; and Sophia, if she had not excited disgust by her assumption of imperial power, had at least failed to attract the affections of the people.

Peter soon had a considerable force at his command; and the Strelitz, disappointed in their attempt on his life, were alarmed at the danger they had incurred, and abandoned an enterprise which gave no promise



of success. The princess Sophia, feeling herself deserted, sent commissioners to her half-brother, to propose terms of accommodation, and express a hope that their differences might be amicably adjusted. Hesitation at this time, on the part of the young czar, would probably have had an evil influence on the whole of his life. But he felt himself master of the position, and refused all terms except those he dictated, which were, the immediate and entire abandonment, by the princess, of her authority as regent. The commissioners themselves, on hearing Peter's statement of the misconduct and treachery of Sophia, abandoned their trust, and attached themselves to his cause. The princess then left Moscow at the head of a considerable guard, and proceeded towards the convent of the Trinity, with the hope of being able to soften Peter, or, by her beauty and intrigues, regain her lost influence over the soldiery.

She was met by messengers from the czar, who forbade her approach, and demanded, in the name of the czar, the surrender of Scheglovitöi (the commander of the Strelitz), the banishment of her minister, Prince Galitzin, and her full resignation of all right and title to the throne of Russia. These terms were a death-blow to the ambition of the princess; but she was helpless,

and compelled to submit to them. Not only was she deserted by her former supporters, but the anger of the people was excited against her on account of her recent attempt on the life of Peter. Galitzin was banished, his wealth confiscated, and an allowance made to him scarcely sufficient for the support of life. The chief of the Strelitz, together with many of his followers, suffered the punishment of the knout, and were then beheaded. Nor did the princess escape with the forfeiture of her power; for Peter compelled her to enter a convent, where she was confined during the remainder of her life. This was in September, 1689, in which month, the young czar issued a proclamation, stating, that the name of the late regent would no longer be mentioned in any public document: at the same time, her image was struck from the coinage, and her favourites and servants dismissed from the Kremlin.

Peter and his supporters then made a solemn entrance into Moscow, where, in the sight of the assembled people, he embraced his brother Ivan, who left all the power in his hands. From this period Peter reigned alone; for his brother had no share in the regal authority. Sensible of his unfitness for the duties of his high position, Ivan led a retired life, and died in the year 1696.

## CHAPTER XVIII

NEW ERA IN RUSSIAN HISTORY; PETER THE SOLE RULER; HE RAISES AN ARMY ON THE EUROPEAN PRINCIPLE; ADDRESSES HIMSELF TO THE CREATION OF A NAVY; PETER DECLARES WAR AGAINST TURKEY; AFTER BEING REPULSED FROM AZOFF, HE SUCCEEDS IN TAKING IT; HIS TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO MOSCOW; THE CZAR RESOLVES TO TRAVEL, THAT HE MAY CIVILISE RUSSIA BY TRANSPLANTING INTO IT THE ARTS OF OTHER NATIONS; CONSPIRACY TO MURDER PETER; HIS FEROCIOUS REVENGE ON THE BAFFLED ASSASSINS.

WE commence a new era in Russian history. At this point there is a gulph placed between the past and the future of the empire. The past is Asiatic, the future European: the past is a blind, unsteady struggle from barbarism; the future a progress—slow, but full of purpose—towards civilisation. Russia had gone through a long probationary period of political discord and social abasement; a period necessarily long, in consequence of the barbarism of

her people, and the numerous races from which they sprung; but she was now ready for the iron hand that was to break the chains of the past, and mould her into a better and a softer future. The wild races of which that scattered population was composed, had become an empire. They had been bound together into a people, and become a bulwark, which broke off from Europe the savage inundations of the robber-hosts of Asia. The Tartars had exhausted their dangerous



power by dashing themselves blindly against the territories and cities of the north: the time was coming when the Turks were to do the same. The Russian empire both was, and is, an imperious necessity. Her supposed dream of European conquest was a delusion, which would have led to her ruin and probable partition; but her natural work is in the East. In that direction she has much of inert barbarism to crush beneath her iron feet. Imperfect as her own civilisation is even to this hour, she is yet the pioneer of progress, and will share with England the gigantic labour of regenerating the Asiatic world. It is the very similarity of the destiny of these two great empires that created a jealousy between them, and at length led to war. But the governments of England and Russia had very little intention of permanently injuring each other; they know that the decrepid Eastern world has spoil enough for each of them, and that they were wasting their efforts by attacking each other.

During the remarkable reign of Peter, Russia was, to speak metaphorically, reborn; and from this period dates her greatness, and, indeed, her history, as a European state. Empires must progress or decay. It has been well observed, that policy would have drawn Russia into an intercourse with Europe, even if necessity had not compelled her to advance. A writer whom we have frequently quoted, says—"What appeared at this crisis to be wanted, was a master mind that should break up old customs, and enlighten the empire against its will. Bound on all sides by mountains and arid plains, except where a wild sea, that for three-fourths of the year was locked up in ice, interrupted the monotonous girth with a no less repulsive barrier, Russia presented a spectacle of moral and physical exclusion, which could not be made to yield unless before some gigantic power that should be capable of creating a new people out of the sturdy and hitherto changeless elements of the old. The man who should effect this mighty revolution required many qualities, as rare in their separate existence as they are almost unknown in their combination: a mind springing far beyond its age; a judgment sound and rapid; a spirit of self-devotion to the interests of humanity; herculean bodily strength; firmness of purpose; and indomitable energy. All these qualities were comprehended in Peter, and, fortu-

nately, he dedicated them with inflexible zeal to the benefit of his country."

When, in 1689, Peter obtained the government, and really commenced his chequered but brilliant reign, he was but in his eighteenth year. In person he was tall and well made. He had a robust constitution, and a countenance which regular features and eyes that sparkled with vivacity, gave some claim to the term handsome. When grave, the expression of his face often indicated great severity; but at other times he was lively and sociable, and always full of energy and activity.

Young as Peter was, he immediately addressed himself to the task of reforming the entire government of the country and the manners of the people. He began with the army; for the art of war, as practised by the more civilised nations of Europe, was almost unknown in Russia. The empire had no regular army, nor any regular troops except the Strelitz; and they were turbulent in times of peace, and little to be depended on in those of war. Having devoted himself assiduously to a study of the principles of military science, Peter resolved to raise a standing army on the European principle. With this object, he appointed two of his early companions (Lefort the Genevan, and General Patrick Gordon, a Scotchman) to raise and drill some regiments of foreign troops. They were readily enabled to execute their commission, on account of the troubles which at that time agitated both France and Scotland. Lefort raised a regiment of 12,000 men, of which force he was made the general, and five colonels were appointed to serve under him. The troops raised by General Gordon increased this force to 20,000 men, who were intended to balance the power of the Strelitz, and, if necessary, extinguish them as enemies to the state.

While thus surrounding himself with a well-organised army, Peter did not lose sight of the great necessity of Russia—a navy, and outlets to the sea. Without them the empire would be a lonely giant dwelling in the midst of deserts, and shut out from communication with the rest of the world. To speak without a metaphor, Russia, without ships and sea-coasts, would be without commerce and civilisation. Her people were isolated to an extent that made them barbarous and unsocial. An ancient law had prohibited them from leaving the country; and, in their ignorance, they despised



the inhabitants of other lands. This isolation not only kept them ignorant and boorish, but was an almost insurmountable obstacle in the path of national improvement. Peter resolved this should be changed—that Russia should have ships and harbours, commerce and intercourse with nations of more enlarged ideas and polished manners—that his country should take her place amongst the greatest empires of the earth, and become all that her vast territory and immense natural resources would permit!

The creation of a navy in such a country as Russia, whose only outlets were, at that time, into the two inland seas—the Euxine and the Caspian, and the inclement waters of the Arctic ocean—was a work of almost insuperable difficulty; the more so to a man who, it is said, on account of some accident which occurred in his infancy, entertained such a dread of the water as to be seized with a shuddering, and sometimes with convulsions, even if obliged to pass over a brook. The authenticity of the story has been questioned; but if it is true, the future reformer utterly subdued, if he did not altogether extinguish, this antipathy.

It has been said that, in every task, nothing is so difficult as the beginning. One day Peter was walking in the gardens of Ismaelof, a summer palace built by his grandfather, when he saw the wreck of a small English sailing-boat lying rotting in the grounds. Turning to Timmerman, his master of mathematics and a native of Germany, he inquired how that little boat came to be of a different construction from those which he had seen on the Moska? The mathematician explained that it was made to go with sails, the use of which was not then known in Russia. The czar desired to make a trial of it, and directed that the boat should be repaired and rendered fit for service. Here lay a difficulty: where was a workman to be found able to undertake the task? Peter's father, Alexis, had imported a ship-builder and a number of carpenters from Holland, for the purpose of building vessels to trade down the river Volga to the Caspian Sea; but the piracies of Stenka Radzin and his followers extinguished this budding commerce. The Dutch artisans left the country—all except one, named Brandt, a master-carpenter and very good ship-builder. After a considerable search, this man was discovered in obscurity at Moscow, and employed to restore the wreck. This he did so successfully, that Peter

ordered him to build two frigates and three yachts, which, when completed, were placed on a large lake, and occasionally navigated by the czar himself, who soon acquired a knowledge of the duties of a pilot. Here, then, was the beginning; small enough, it is true, but one which led to great results nevertheless. In all remarkable projects, it is not the bulk of the germ we have to consider, but the capacity of growth.

A few years later—that is, in 1694—Peter visited Archangel, the chief town on the shores of the White Sea. He took Brandt with him; and, after inspecting the merchant vessels that lay in the harbour, ordered the Dutchman to build him another vessel larger than the previous ones. Peter carefully inspected the progress, and frequently assisted the workmen. When his ship was built, he embarked in it upon the White Sea, and acted in the capacity of steersman. Peter had, no doubt, visited Archangel with the object of personally observing how far it was adapted by nature for becoming a great commercial port. He soon became convinced that it was too remote from the centre of Russia, and also from the chief ports of other countries, to command any great trade, or be a convenient outlet for the commerce or fleets of the empire. His thoughts, therefore, naturally reverted to the Black Sea, the Caspian, and also to the Baltic. Then it was that he saw the policy of Ivan the Terrible in his constant endeavours to obtain possession of Livonia, which necessarily gave to those who held it an outlet to the Baltic. Probably from this time dates the conception of those gigantic projects of territorial extension which Peter afterwards so steadily pursued, and even bequeathed to his successors.

The czar left Archangel to put a part of his views into immediate execution. Turkey and Poland were still at war, and the sultan was also engaged with other formidable enemies. Taking advantage of these circumstances, Peter declared war upon the Ottoman Porte. This was not from caprice, or love of military glory: war with this remarkable man was not an exciting pastime, but always a means to some definite end which could not be obtained without it. In this instance he desired to extend his southern frontier to the shores of the Black Sea; and for this purpose he desired to obtain possession of Azoff, which was then an important fortress in the hands of the Turks.

It will be seen, by referring to a map of



Russia, that Azoff stands at the mouth of the Don, where that river pours its waters into the little sea which bears the same name as the town. Peter had ordered vessels to be constructed, with which he intended to sail down the river and attack Azoff by water, while his troops assailed it by land. Many difficulties necessarily lay in the way of projects to which his people were so unused, and the vessels could not be got ready in time. The czar, therefore, was compelled to conduct this his first campaign by land only.

The Russian army commenced its march in the summer of 1695. Conscious of his own inexperience in military matters, and desirous of setting an example of subordination to his nobility, Peter served in the army as a volunteer, and gave the command to Generals Lefort, Gordon, Scheremetof and Schein. The fortress of Azoff was very strong, and defended by a powerful garrison. After a long encampment before the walls, and a vain attempt to storm them, the Russians were compelled to raise the siege. This circumstance was largely attributable to the conduct of a native of Dantzic, named Jacob, who had the direction of the artillery under the command of General Schein. The latter had condemned Jacob to the terrible and disgraceful punishment of the knout. The Russians submitted to this humiliation, and remained in the service; but Jacob resolved to be revenged. Accordingly he spiked the Russian cannon, deserted to the Turks, turned Mohammedan, and defended the town with great success.

Though baffled in this attempt upon Azoff, Peter renewed it in the spring of the following year, 1696. By that time his little fleet, consisting of twelve armed vessels, was ready; and he had remedied many defects which action had rendered apparent in his army. Instead of separating it into divisions independent of each other, he placed it under the sole command of General Schein. Its numerical strength, also, was increased, and several foreign engineers employed to give greater effect to the artillery department. This time Peter was more fortunate; his vessels defeated the Turkish saicks that had been sent from Constantinople; the fire of his cannon also proved superior to that of the enemy; and on the 28th of July the Turks surrendered the town to the victors, and even complied with Peter's demand that they should deliver up the traitor Jacob.

Azoff once in the hands of the czar, he made preparations for keeping it there. With this view he improved the fortifications, erected a large harbour, and prepared to augment his fleet. His design was to fit out a fleet to act against the Turks, consisting of nine 60-gun ships, and of forty-one more, carrying each from thirty to fifty pieces of cannon. The principal nobility and the wealthiest merchants were obliged to contribute to the fitting-out of this fleet; and as Peter thought that the estates of the clergy ought to bear a proportion in the service of the common cause, orders were issued that the patriarch, the bishops, and heads of the church, should find money to forward this new expedition, in honour of their country, and for the general advantage of Christendom. He also obliged the Cossacks to build a number of light boats, such as they were in the habit of using, with which they might easily infest the whole coast of the Crimea. His object was, to drive both Tartars and Turks from this fertile peninsula—the present Italy of Russia—and to establish, through Georgia, a trade with Persia.

The changes Peter had made, notwithstanding their evidently beneficial nature, had excited some uneasiness, if not discontent, among the slothful and superstitious people. This was not unobserved by the czar, who endeavoured to counteract it by deeds of a benevolent and parental kind. He had already mitigated the suffering resulting from a season of great scarcity, by his exertions in procuring such a supply of corn as sufficed for the most urgent wants of the people. He now resolved, on his return to Moscow, to gratify the national vanity and the love of amusement of his subjects, by making a magnificent triumphal entry into the capital, after the manner of the ancient Romans. If something of personal pride and ostentation was mingled with the motives that actuated him in taking this step, we may yet believe the assertion of his biographers, that it was intended less as a memorial of his own triumph, than to reward the soldiers by a public token of admiration, and to inspire the spectators with patriotic enthusiasm. Peter gave the foremost places in the procession to General Schein and to Lefort, whom he had created admiral of the fleet. He himself mingled with the other officers, endeavouring by this example to convince the nobility that merit ought to be the only



road to military preferment. Jacob, the artillery officer who had deserted to the Turks, was drawn along in the procession in a cart, together with the gibbet to which his body had been fastened after he had been broken upon the wheel. Fireworks and other rejoicings attended this military festival, and a medal was struck to commemorate it. On one side it bore the inscription, "Peter I., the august Emperor of Muscovy;" on the reverse was a representation of Azoff, and the words, "Victorious by fire and water."

Peter was not the monarch to rest satisfied with military triumphs and the applauses of his people. The entrance he had obtained into the Black Sea was useful, but insufficient as an outlet for commerce and an opening for civilisation. The Euxine did not make a passage to the arts and commerce of Europe. Savage and uncultivated Asia lay stretched along its shores, and the cannon of Constantinople closed up the mouth of the Bosphorus to all but friendly vessels. The thoughts of the czar reverted to the Baltic—it alone could connect Russia with the rest of Europe; but the way to its indurated coasts lay through a country then in the possession of the warlike Swedes, and thickly studded with strong fortresses. Yet the end to be accomplished balanced the dangers to be encountered, and Peter resolved to overcome all obstacles that shut out his country from intercourse with those European nations which, in manners, knowledge, and the arts, were so much beyond it.

Matters were not yet ripe for the daring experiments he contemplated. Suppose that he was master of Livonia, the Baltic would be almost valueless to him till he was well prepared to turn its advantages to account. Unless he could cover its waters with an efficient fleet, they were but as a thunderbolt in the hands of a child. Truly great minds are ever patient, and recognise the fact that haste and rashness are weakness. Peter resolved first to gain from other countries that information on naval and other topics which did not exist in his own. With this object he sent, in the year 1697, sixty young Russians of Lefort's regiment to Venice and Leghorn, to learn the art of navigation. Forty more he sent to Holland, to instruct themselves in the art of building and working large vessels; while he dispatched others to Germany, to become acquainted with the military discipline of

that nation. The expense attending upon these circumstances he provided for by raising the custom-house duties from five to ten per cent.

Peter was not yet satisfied with his efforts to obtain a knowledge of the arts of other nations. He desired to see with his own eyes that civilisation he longed to introduce into Russia. He was now four-and-twenty years of age—one admirably fitted for the endurance of fatigue and the habit of observation. "The period," says an interesting writer, "was one when popular opinion had revolutionised nearly the whole surface of the civilised world. It was admirably adapted to his purposes. In England, the people had just deposed a weak and bigoted monarch, who attempted to arrest the progress of mind; and William III., the intrepid stadtholder of the house of Orange, filled the throne. In France, Louis XIV. was on the point of closing the memorable treaty of Ryswick; Charles XII. had just ascended the throne of Sweden, and the elector of Brandenburg had assumed the regal honours. In Poland, the death of Sobieski opened a contest for the sovereignty, which lay between the Prince of Conti and Augustus of Saxony; the latter of whom, for politic reasons, was favoured by Peter; while Mustapha II., quailing before mightier arms, was overthrown by the emperor Leopold. At this juncture, while other powers were engrossed in the agitations consequent upon improved civilisation, Peter the Great left Moscow to go forth into Europe, and glean the ripe ears of the harvest for his own empire."

Before the czar's departure, an alarming outbreak occurred, in which Peter narrowly escaped with his life. Notwithstanding his recent triumph at Azoff, he was unable to win the affections of the people. Ignorant, bigoted, and slavish, there was scarcely an act of his life that did not grate against some of their prejudices. He had brought foreign artisans, and even foreign troops, into Russia; sent young men out of the country—an act which the clergy regarded as both dangerous and profane; and had even resolved to travel abroad himself. His manners, also, were displeasing to his dull-minded subjects, and quite inconsistent with those which they thought becoming in a czar. The solemn pomp and ostentatious haughtiness to which they were accustomed, were not to be seen in Peter. His manners were familiar even to vulgarity. Instead of



appearing but seldom in public, and then surrounded by guards, he was to be seen almost every day in the square of the Kremlin, exercising the troops; or to be met with, in the plainest dress, in the streets, on his way to visit some private citizen; or in the workshops of the artisans, where he passed a great deal of his time.

It might be supposed that the unpopularity produced by such inoffensive acts as these, would be but slight and transient. It was not so. The nobles felt their dignity lessened by a novel system which made rank dependent upon intellectual strength; and the clergy were vehemently opposed to Peter's innovations, because they knew their power was based upon the ignorance of the multitude, and it therefore became their interest to keep down the spirit of inquiry. As for the people themselves, generations of barbarism and ignorance, added to their constitutional indolence, made them regard all improvement with detestation. The comprehensive mind of the czar perceived and understood all this. He knew that he should have much opposition to overcome, and he resolved to overcome it, even though it was necessary to crush those who offered it. He saw that it was imperative that he should grasp and wield all the power of the empire, for that the state of Russia required a wise despot for its regeneration. He saw that a mild exercise of power would not always serve; and he resolved, if necessary, to terrify the people into submission by deeds of appalling severity.

Influenced by the prevailing discontent, the turbulent Strelitz, who had been supplanted by the regiments disciplined after the European fashion, entered into a conspiracy to murder the czar. Tsikler and Sukanim, two leaders of the Strelitz, were at the head of the plot. The design of these men was, to set the city on fire at night, and when Peter hastened to assist in extinguishing it, as they were convinced he would, to murder him in the confusion. After this, they intended to massacre all the foreign soldiers, release the princess Sophia from her convent, and place her upon the throne.

On the evening of the night appointed for this sanguinary outbreak, the principal conspirators assembled at a banquet held at the house of Sukanim. Here they stimulated their courage with large draughts of wine, and prepared themselves by this means for

the work of slaughter that was to follow. Two of the number, however, quailed before a contemplation of the approaching massacre. On the plea of having drank too much, they obtained permission to return home and sleep until midnight; but on leaving the place of rendezvous, they hurried to the czar, and revealed the particulars of the conspiracy. Peter immediately sent an order to the captain of one of his regiments, to proceed with his troop to Sukanim's house, and silently surround it exactly at the hour of ten;—that is, ten was the hour Peter intended to write, and believed he had written; but in the confusion of the moment he wrote eleven.

Shortly after ten, Peter went alone to the dwelling of Sukanim, expecting to find the conspirators already in the hands of his guards. The soldiers were not to be seen; but the doors of the house were open, and a considerable noise was heard from within. Peter supposed that this proceeded from the struggle and confusion attending the arrest of the rebels; and acting on the impulse of the moment, he at once entered. To his astonishment, he found himself alone in the midst of the men who, in an excited and half-intoxicated state, were at that moment vociferating an oath that they would put him to death. At his unexpected entrance they rose in confusion, and would probably have rushed upon him at once, in the belief that they had been betrayed; but Peter's presence of mind saved him. Though surprised and angry that his commands had not been obeyed, he assumed a cheerful air, and advancing unhesitatingly among the throng of conspirators, greeted them with familiarity. Having, he said, seen a light in the house as he was passing by, and hearing the sounds of revelry, he entered with a view of sharing in their pleasures, and begged leave to join them at their table.

The intended assassins, deceived by the cordiality and apparent unsuspectingness of his manners, returned his greeting, and gave him as unconstrained a welcome as they could. Putting the wine about, they drank his health; but soon the leaders amongst them began to exchange looks and signals concerning the expediency of dispatching him at once. Peter saw his danger, and kept his eyes fixed upon their movements, though without seeming to do so. The restraint which each party felt, soon produced an uneasiness in the com-



pany; and one of the conspirators, leaning over the table to Sukanim, whispered, "Brother, it is time?" The latter hesitated, and muttered, "Not yet!" feeling, no doubt, an additional responsibility as master of the house, and perhaps some sense of shame that one who had entered beneath his roof as a guest, should be inhospitably murdered there. Peter heard the whisper; but fortunately, at the same time, he caught the tramp of his approaching guards. Starting from his seat, he felled the traitor to the ground with a blow upon the face, and shouted, "Not yet, villain; if it is not yet time for you, scoundrel, it is for me!" At the same moment the guards entered the apartment, and the startled conspirators fell upon their knees and implored pardon. Peter was immovable, and ordered them all to be instantly put in chains. Then turning sternly to the captain of the guards, he struck him on the face, and reproached him for his want of punctuality. The officer, who was exact to the time he had been commanded, produced his written order, and the czar found the error was his own. He at once acknowledged it, proclaimed the fidelity of the officer, and endeavoured to atone for the blow he had inflicted by kissing him upon the forehead, and embracing him in his arms.

Peter's vengeance might have been politic, but it was barbarous and revolting. He sometimes expressed an admiration for the imperial savage, Ivan the Terrible; and on this occasion he rivalled him in the exercise of a merciless administration of justice. The wretches first had their limbs dislocated upon the rack; then separately severed from their bodies; after which, the maimed and mostly lifeless trunks were decapitated. The heads were subsequently exposed on the summit of a column, around the base of which the limbs of the traitors were piled with disgusting symmetry. With all Peter's greatness of mind, he had, when provoked, a ferocious love of cruelty, even for its own sake. When he surrendered himself for a time to the savage instincts of his nature, he actually experienced gratification from the sight of humanity writhing in torture, or pouring out its life-blood on the scaffold. Much he did in aftertimes that was utterly indefensible; but for this exhibition of revengeful justice some excuse may be offered. It was his first stern lesson to a people who would not be governed except by the sword; his first intimation, that if mildness could not win them to submit to beneficial changes, severity should coerce them into doing so—a sad but inevitable necessity.

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE CZAR TRAVELS; VISITS THE DOCKYARD OF SARDAM; ENGAGES HIMSELF AS A COMMON CARPENTER; HE VISITS ENGLAND, AND IS RECEIVED WITH GREAT COURTESY BY WILLIAM III.; PETER RETURNS TO HOLLAND, AND THEN VISITS VIENNA; HE RETURNS TO RUSSIA ON ACCOUNT OF A REBELLION OF THE STRELITZ; FRIGHTFUL SEVERITIES OF PETER; DEATH OF LEFORT; SOCIAL AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS OF PETER. HE TOLERATES ALL DENOMINATIONS OF CHRISTIANS IN RUSSIA; ALTERS THE CALENDAR; PROGRESS OF REFORM.

HAVING struck terror into the discontented people, and appalled the turbulent Strelitz by the fearful example he had made of their traitorous leaders, the czar commenced his journey in the month of April, 1697. He travelled *incognito* in the train of General Lefort and the boyards Mentschikoff and Golowin, whom he appointed ambassadors to the countries he intended to visit. An old boyard, of iron resolution and inflexible honesty, named Romodanovsky, together

with another, were entrusted with the government during the absence of the czar, who directed them to consult with the rest of the nobility in matters of importance. General Gordon also remained at Moscow with Peter's foreign troops, whose very lives depended upon their fidelity to their master. Hated as they were by the nobles, the Strelitz, and the people, they could only repose in security under the shelter of his favour.



Peter and his ambassadors left Russia by the way of Novgorod, and proceeded from thence through Esthonia and Livonia, which were at that time in the possession of Sweden. At Livonia he desired to see the fortifications of Riga, its capital—a wish the governor of them refused to grant; which slight Peter did not readily forget. Indeed, from that time he resolved to annex Livonia to his dominions. He then proceeded to Prussia, the alliance of which growing power he thought it prudent to cultivate. The elector, Frederic, who afterwards assumed the title of king, received the czar with an ostentatious magnificence; and the most costly presents were exchanged on both sides. Peter dressed in the German fashion; but the contrast between the French costume, which prevailed at the court of Berlin, and the long Asiatic robes of the Russians, with their caps adorned with pearls and diamonds, and their scimitars hanging by their sides, had a remarkable effect. During his stay at Berlin, Peter, in a fit of intoxication, drew his sword upon his favourite general, Lefort; but, happily, he was pacified before mischief ensued.

At length the Russian party arrived at Amsterdam, where Peter assumed the disguise of a Dutch skipper, and went to the great ship-building village of Sardam. He was much surprised at the number of workmen constantly employed, the order and exactness observed in their several departments, the dispatch with which they built and fitted out ships, the quantity of stores, and the various machines for the purpose of economising labour. He was incessant in his inquiries and observations, and sometimes placed himself in positions of danger; as, in order to see everything himself, he climbed the rigging of vessels, and inspected those parts of them where only an experienced sailor could expect to be secure. On these occasions he was greatly annoyed by the vulgar curiosity of the people, who not only came in crowds to see a powerful sovereign in the habit of a seaman, but impeded his progress by thronging upon him, and even frequently subjected him to rude exclamations and remarks. At times he was so irritated by this annoyance, that his rage brought on one of those epileptic fits to which it is said he was subject from infancy. They were sometimes even excited by the sight of any object to which he entertained an antipathy, such as black-

beetles, and certain reptiles which he held in abhorrence.

The czar purchased a boat, made a mast for it himself, worked at the forges, the rope-yards, the mills for timber-sawing, and, by degrees, educated himself as a working ship-builder. Then he engaged himself as a common carpenter, that he might have an opportunity of impressing upon his mind all he had learnt. He took the name of Peter Timmerman, though his fellow-workmen generally called him Master Peter, or Peterbas. While in this strange position, he scrupulously attended his work at the required hours, prepared his own meals, worked hard from morning till night, and received his wages like the rest of the workmen. The latter were at first greatly astonished to see a sovereign their companion, but they gradually got used to it. Here, for seven weeks, the ruler of a vast empire lived in a little shingle-hut, on the proceeds of his own labour, in the intervals of which he corresponded with his ministers at home. During this period, the famous English warrior, the Duke of Marlborough, visited Sardam, and put himself in the way of Peter. The great soldier, who was proud of his handsome person, and almost a dandy in the matter of dress, beheld the czar habited in a red woollen shirt, duck trousers, and a sailor's hat; and seated, adze in hand, on a rough log of timber, which lay on the ground. His dark-brown hair fell in natural curls about his bare neck, while his keen eyes glanced from one object to another with singular rapidity, as he conversed with great earnestness and much gesticulation with some strangers. Marlborough approached, and contrived, in some measure, to engage the czar's attention by some remarks on ship-building. They were interrupted by the appearance of a stranger in a foreign costume, who respectfully presented an official letter to the seeming workman. Peter rose instantly, snatched the letter, tore off the seals, and read it eagerly. The duke, who had achieved so great a military reputation in Europe, and exercised almost more political influence than any man not seated on a throne, walked unregarded away. It was from his miserable hut at Sardam that Peter issued instructions to his army in the Ukraine, under the command of General Schein and Prince Dolgorouki, then acting against the Turks, which resulted in a victory over the latter, and the conquest of the town of Perekop.



Peter desired Lefort and the other ambassadors to disguise themselves also as working-men, and follow his example; but they by no means relished the scheme, and contrived to evade partaking the severe and unromantic toils of their master. Treating his desire as a royal jest, they dwelt in a comfortable house, and enjoyed all the luxuries of their station; while he lived in a hovel, and subsisted upon fare of the coarsest description. During this period, he went frequently from Sardam to Amsterdam, to hear the anatomical lectures of the celebrated Ruish, from which he derived so much benefit, as to be able to perform some surgical operations in case of necessity. He also studied natural philosophy, under Vitsen, a man celebrated for his patriotic virtue, and for the noble use he made of his immense fortune. In addition to this, the indefatigable czar attended the hospitals, where he learned to bleed and draw teeth; visited nearly every literary, scientific, or charitable institution; together with all extensive manufacturing establishments, which he examined carefully, with the intention of introducing similar ones into Russia. Whenever he beheld anything new, he made inquiries concerning its nature and use, and his active mind did not rest until he obtained an explanation.

Having passed about nine months in Holland, Peter left that country, and proceeded to England, where he was very hospitably received by William III. These two remarkable men appear to have had a generous and enlarged estimation of each other. The czar arrived in this country in the January of 1698; his object being to learn the theory of ship-building, and to visit the dockyards of Deptford, Woolwich, and Chatham. King William appointed the Marquis of Carmarthen to attend upon him, who agreed so well with the whims of the autocrat, that they are reported to have sat up together late into the nights, drinking brandy and pepper. William also placed two vessels at the command of the czar whenever he should think proper to sail on the Thames.

Having lodged for a short time in London, he hired the house at Deptford of the famous John Evelyn, who bitterly complained of the havoc which the czar and his attendants made in his elegantly laid-out garden. One of Peter's favourite amusements was to be driven in a wheelbarrow through a holly-hedge of which Evelyn was

very proud. The dirtiness of the czar's habits were such as to excite the disgust of the gentlemanly and gossiping old royalist. Peter spent much of his time at Rotherhithe, where a ship was building for him. He often went out on the Thames in a small-decked boat, accompanied only by Mentschikoff and three or four others of his suite, who worked the vessel, while he steered it. His object in these excursions was to teach his companions how to command ships when they returned home. In the evening they usually went to a tavern in Great Tower-street, near Tower-hill, where they smoked their pipes, and drank beer and brandy. During his sojourn in this country, Peter went to Portsmouth, and visited a grand naval review and sham fight. The university of Oxford complimented him by conferring upon him a doctor's degree. In England, as in Holland, the czar visited the public institutions and great manufactories, and seemed ever intent upon acquiring such information as would tend to the promotion of the civilisation of his people. His attention was particularly attracted to the art of engineering, and he took into his service upwards of five hundred persons, comprising engineers, officers, surgeons, and artisans. Amongst the former was Captain Perry, who afterwards wrote a life of the czar; in which the author asserts that there was not so much as a single article belonging to a ship, from the casting of cannon to the making of cables, but what Peter minutely observed and set his hands to. Mr. Ferguson, a mathematician and astronomer of some distinction, also accompanied the Russian reformer back to his own country. Ferguson introduced the arithmetical mode of keeping accounts into the Russian exchequer, where, before that time, they had made use only of the Tartar method of reckoning with balls strung upon a wire; a method which its primitive simplicity made extremely imperfect and perplexing.

The czar left England in April; but before doing so, he was presented by William with a beautiful yacht. Peter returned the compliment by making William a present of a ruby of the value of £10,000, which, in a thoroughly characteristic manner, he took from his waistcoat pocket, wrapped up in a bit of brown paper. He also conferred a valuable privilege on the Marquis of Carmarthen, by granting him a right to license every hogshead of



tobacco exported to Russia. The habit of smoking had hitherto been condemned in Russia by the patriarch, on the ground that it was unclean and sinful. Peter thought otherwise, and resolved on its introduction into the country.\* During his stay, he was much struck by that magnificent building which a generous nation has erected at Greenwich for its superannuated seamen. Until Peter had actually visited it, and seen the pensioners, he could scarcely be persuaded but that it was a royal palace. William having one day asked him how he liked his hospital for decayed seamen, the czar replied, "If I were the adviser of your majesty, I should counsel you to remove your court to Greenwich, and convert St. James's into a hospital."

Leaving England, Peter returned to Holland; from whence, after a brief stay, he proceeded to Vienna, with the object of making himself acquainted with the dress, discipline, and tactics of the emperor's army, then considered the best in Europe. "During his stay at Vienna," observes his biographer Voltaire, "there happened nothing remarkable except the celebration of the ancient feast of 'Landlord and Landlady,' which Leopold thought proper to revive upon the czar's account, after it had been disused during his whole reign. The manner of making this entertainment, to which the Germans give the name of *wirthschaft*, was as follows:—The emperor is landlord and the empress landlady, while the king of the Romans, the archdukes and the archduchesses, are generally their assistants. They entertain people of all nations, dressed after the most ancient fashion of their respective countries. Those who are invited as guests draw lots for tickets, on each of which is written the name of the nation and the character they are to represent. One has a ticket for a Chinese mandarin; another for a Tartarian mirza; another for a Persian satrap, or a Roman senator. A princess may happen to draw lots for a gardener's wife, or for a milkwoman, and a prince may act the peasant or soldier. They have dances suited to these different characters; and the landlord and landlady, with their family, wait at table. Such was the old custom; but on this occasion, Joseph,

king of the Romans, and the Countess of Traun, represented the ancient Egyptians; the Archduke Charles and the Countess of Walstein were dressed like the Flemings in the reign of Charles V.; the Archduchess Mary Elizabeth and Count Traun were in the habit of Tartars; the Archduchess Josephine and the Count of Vorkla appeared in a Persian dress; the Archduchess Mariamme and Prince Maximilian of Hanover, acted the character of North Holland peasants. Peter assumed the habit of a Friesland boor, and in this character was addressed by everybody; at the same time that they talked to him of the great czar of Muscovy. These are indeed minutenesses; but whatever revives the memory of ancient customs, is, in some measure, worthy of being recorded."

The czar intended to pass through Italy homewards; but just as he was about to leave Vienna, he received information from Moscow that the Strelitz had again broken out into rebellion. He instantly departed in secret, and, passing through Poland, arrived at Moscow in September, 1698, before any one there knew of his having left Germany.

During the absence of Peter, the discontented had recovered their courage; and the clergy, together with some of the old nobles, longed for the destruction of a prince whose reforming spirit they detested. During the czar's stay in Holland, he signed an edict commanding a body of Strelitz to proceed to the frontiers of Poland, to be ready, if necessary, to support the claims of Augustus, the elector of Saxony, against those of the French prince de Conti, both of whom had been chosen to fill the throne of Poland. The Strelitz were averse to this duty; and, instead of discharging it, they proceeded in the direction of Moscow, under the pretence that the czar had died abroad, and that it was necessary for them to secure the succession to his son Alexis. Their real object, however, was to place the plotting princess Sophia on the throne, and to exclude Peter, who they considered had violated the laws and customs of his country by daring to travel for instruction among foreign nations. Prince Romodanovsky, the regent, dispatched General Gordon with his

\* Voltaire, in his *Life of Charles XII.*, while speaking of Russia at this period, observes—"A person of undoubted veracity, assured me, he was present at a public disputation where the question was, 'Whether the practice of smoking tobacco was

a sin?' The respondent maintained that it was lawful to get drunk with brandy, but not to smoke, because the Holy Scriptures saith, 'That which proceedeth out of the mouth of a man defileth him, and that which entereth into it doth not defile him.'"



foreign troops, with directions to crush this insubordination at once. The latter tried to persuade the rebels to return to their duty, but they were secretly urged on by the priests, who infamously pronounced their cause to be sacred. Gordon, finding mildness to be useless, gave battle to the Strelitz, and vanquished them, after a short contest. The prisoners were immediately chained and thrown into dungeons, to abide the judgment of the czar.

Thus, on Peter's arrival at Moscow, he found the rebellion extinguished, and himself welcomed by a people who had been taught to stand in awe of his commanding intellect and his relentless severity. He first rewarded the foreign troops, and then addressed himself to take such a ferocious revenge upon the rebels, as should for the future effectually intimidate the discontented among his subjects. The accounts existing of some of the details which followed have been disputed, and no doubt many exaggerated statements concerning the savage severity of the czar, obtained a currency throughout Europe. Still enough is known with certainty to warrant us in the expression of emotions of wonder and horror. Strange is it, that so great a man should have been actuated by the wildest excesses of brutality, and have derived the ferocious pleasure of an infuriated tiger, in rending and crushing those who had offended him. The only excuse that can be framed for him, is the necessity he was under of reducing to obedience the insolent barbarity of the Strelitz, and of intimidating the factious and ignorant priesthood and their dull followers, who hated and opposed the reforms he had resolved to effect.

The czar did not satisfy himself with putting the offenders to death, but he spared no torture that could prolong their dying agonies. An immense number were put to the rack in his presence, and the cries and moans of the unhappy wretches were mingled with his questions and reproaches. Several were put to death by the horrible process of being broken upon the wheel; and two women, who had played an active part in the conspiracy, were buried alive. As to the common offenders, it is said that no less than 7,000 of them were executed over a period of several months. Of these, 2,000 were hanged by his guards, and the rest beheaded, kneeling in rows of fifties, before trunks of trees laid on the ground. At these frightful scenes Peter

was also present, and sometimes assisted at them himself, being proud of the dexterity with which he could strike off the head of the victim. Occasionally he was maddened with wine, as well as with blood; and he is reported to have struck off twenty heads within an hour, and drank a draught of wine between each blow. This anecdote is related on the authority of M. Printz, the Prussian ambassador, who states that he was present, and that the czar invited him to try his skill—a proposal which, of course, he declined.

The executions lasted during a period of five months, and the whole empire was struck with terror. Hundreds of bodies were left to moulder and drop from their gibbets, and the rest remained unburied on the spot where they had been decapitated. Stone monuments were afterwards erected, with inscriptions, describing the punishment and the crime that led to it. In consequence of the connection of the princess Sophia with the insurrection, the czar had a number of the rebels hanged around the convent in which she was confined. The Strelitz had deputed three of their number to present an address, soliciting her to accept the crown. These three were gibbeted before the single grated window of her cell, and the fatal document was held out to her by the stiffened arm of one of the dead men. This cruel punishment crushed the hopes and shortened the life of this ambitious and worthless woman; whom a sense of justice forbids us to pity. She became a nun; changed her name to that of Morpha; and died in 1704. The widows and children of the victims of the czar's anger were sent to wild and remote spots, where a certain extent of land was assigned to them, out of which they and their descendants were never to pass.

Peter now wisely resolved utterly to abolish a body of men who were ever ready to break out into disorder and insurrection. From this time the Strelitz ceased to exist as a military body, and their place was supplied by regular regiments, clothed and disciplined after the fashion of other European nations. Within three months twenty-seven new regiments of infantry and two of cavalry were disciplined and brought into marching order.

The severity of the czar, though it generally produced its designed effect of intimidating the disaffected, yet produced some amount of rebellious reaction. A number





FROM THE GREAT BRITAIN THE STRIKE  
IN THE PRINCE OF WALES







of the Strelitz had escaped, after their body had been defeated by General Gordon, and dispersed in different directions. Peter forbade any one, on pain of death, to harbour one of them, or render him the slightest assistance. This severity was ill-judged; for it made the fugitives desperate, and ready for any extremities. Besides, it excited sympathy in their favour; and in the following year (1699), fresh insurrections broke out in distant parts of the empire. Peter had resolved to crush this rebellious temper, even at the cost of his throne itself. Eighty of the Strelitz, who had been taken prisoners, were brought to Moscow and beheaded; it is said by the hands of the czar himself; assisted in this repulsive work by one of his boyards, who held the victims by their hair.

This terrible severity was not without its effect: the superstitious and ignorant obstinacy of the people was broken; they were sooner wearied of rebellion than Peter was of remorselessly punishing it. He appears to have been convinced that the life of a great reformer must be a prolonged struggle against open opposition and secret enemies. Expecting resistance, he was prepared for it; and even persevered in forcing upon Russia the civilisation she vainly strove to reject. That civilisation has been denounced as a spurious one; and it is said, that while he promoted the material interests of his country, he neglected the moral progress of his people. Perhaps he did; but he was not indifferent to it; and no doubt he felt that it was not the sort of work he was most fitted for. Peter addressed himself to the accomplishment of that which he could do best; and though, perhaps, his reforms might have been effected too rapidly, we think he began at the right end. He broke up the apathy of the people by the material benefits and changes he forced upon them. This was more likely to create a tendency to thoughtfulness, and a teachable temper, in the people, than all the moral influence in the world. Indeed, with an ignorant priesthood, fanatically opposed to the new order of things, reform could not have made any perceptible progress through the door of moral teaching. The people would have viewed it with suspicion, and closed their ears and hearts against it.

It was at this period that Peter lost his early friend, Lefort, who, after having been for some time in a declining state, died on the 12th of March, 1699, at the age of

forty-six. The czar bestowed a magnificent funeral upon the man who had been his early instructor, and his faithful assistant in the regeneration of the empire. Peter lamented him as a brother, and walked in the procession, with his pike in his hand, behind the captains, and in the rank of a lieutenant, which, for the purpose of setting an example of subordination to the nobles, he had held in the late general's regiment. Though as a foreigner and a reformer it is not to be expected that Lefort was popular, yet the excellence of his character won him a certain amount of respect. Considerations of self-interest were always sacrificed by him to the public good and the glory of his sovereign, and his whole career was marked by a noble contempt of everything mean or mercenary.

The death of Lefort did not suspend the reforms which the active-minded czar had resolved to carry into effect. Having passed through the lowest degrees in the army himself, he commanded that the sons of the nobility should serve in the capacity of common soldiers before they became officers. Other young nobles he sent on board his ships, and compelled them to serve an apprenticeship to the navy. These commands were extremely arbitrary; but such was the awe with which the czar was regarded, that none dared refuse to obey them.

But Peter did not confine his reforms to the army, and to the creation of a navy; he resolved to modify the government, the church, and to change even the costume and customs of the people. The dress of the Russians was of an Asiatic kind, consisting of a long robe or petticoat, which, together with the practice of wearing long beards, gave them an Eastern look. The beards were a convenience, if not almost a necessity, on account of the severity of the climate; but Peter set himself against both beard and robe, as being associated with, and likely to preserve, the barbarous manners he desired to polish. Certainly the dresses worn in other European countries admitted a freer exercise of the limbs, and tended to the introduction of variety and elegance of costume. Yet the people had the greatest objection to abandon their loose and graceless style of dress, and opposed a passive resistance to the will of the czar. Peter would not suffer his decisions to be evaded, and he laid a heavy tax upon wearing beards and long petticoats. Many parted with their money sooner than conform, but poverty



compelled others to submit. As the people fell in very slowly with the czar's regulations in this respect, he began to quicken their progress after his own eccentric but very decisive fashion. He placed tailors and barbers at each of the gates of Moscow, with directions to cut off the beard, and shorten the dress, of every man who entered. The tenacity with which many of the people, especially the aged, clung to their old costumes, had something of superstition in it. It is related that, on one occasion, the czar met an old citizen coming from the barber's, and, addressing him, observed that he looked quite like a young man, now that he had lost his beard. With a mournful look, the aged man drew from his bosom the beard which had been cut off, and with tears in his eyes told the czar he should preserve it during life, and have it placed in his coffin after death, that he might be able to produce it to St. Nicholas in the next world.

One reason why the czar insisted so earnestly in an endeavour to make his subjects dress themselves like Europeans, instead of Asiatics, was to abolish the fanatical odium in which foreigners were held. As the priests pronounced it to be an act of profanation for strangers to wear the native garb, foreigners were instantly recognised as such by their dress, and, consequently, compelled to have a quarter of the city appropriated to themselves, as a protection against the dislike with which the Russians regarded them. Peter's cosmopolitan mind had, therefore, another cause for putting an end to an external and odious distinction. The czar himself dressed plainly, even to eccentricity and slovenliness. A diplomatic agent at his court gave the following description of this peculiarity, which, though it refers to a later period of his reign, may be quoted here as illustrative of his general habits:—"On all the solemn festivals," observes the writer, "he only wore the uniform of the Presbrazinski regiment of guards.\* I saw him, in 1721, give a public audience to the ambassador of Persia. He entered the hall of audience in nothing more than a surtout of coarse brown cloth. When he was seated on the throne, the attendants brought him a coat of gros-de-Naples, embroidered with silver, which he put on with great precipitation, because the ambassadors were waiting for admittance. During this,

he turned his eyes towards a window, where the czarina had placed herself to observe the ceremony. Catherine was heard repeatedly to burst into loud fits of laughter, as the czar seemed to her to be astonished at seeing himself so finely dressed; and the czar laughed at it himself, as also did all the spectators. As soon as the ambassadors were gone, Peter threw off his embroidered coat, and put on his surtout."

The system of the government, and the collection of the revenue, were placed upon quite a new basis. Hitherto every boyard paid a stipulated sum for his lands, and raised it from his dependents and bondsmen. Sensible that he was greatly defrauded by this means, the czar appointed citizens as his collectors; men who were not powerful enough to claim the privilege of paying into the public treasury only just what they pleased. Rank he resolved to build upon merit, and title upon desert. He abolished the old council of boyards, which had frequently acted with a despotism that enthralled even the sovereign, and established a senate instead. He also suppressed the titles of boyards, of okolnitchi, and of dumnie-diaki; substituting the modern and more expressive titles of presidents, counselors, and senators. All persons holding any office, civil or military, under the crown, he divided into fourteen distinct classes, which prevail to the present time.

An attempt to reform the priesthood has been an effort fatal to many sovereigns; but such was the resolution of Peter, and the terror that he had inspired, that he was enabled to accomplish this dangerous task with comparative ease. The patriarchs had divided and frequently opposed the imperial authority, while the bishops assumed the right of condemning people even to death. Peter resolved to limit the power of both, as occasion offered; but, at first, he struck only at those prejudices which obstructed intellectual improvement, and poisoned the social intercourse of the people. Only those Christians who adopted the Greek church were permitted to reside in Russia; nor were the Russians allowed to marry with persons of a different communion. Peter abolished these interdicts, and established a perfect toleration to all denominations of Christians—Jesuits only excepted, as he had seen so much of their mischievous activity during his travels, as to cause him to entertain an aversion towards them. Strangers he permitted to build churches, and contract

\* So called from the body of soldiers which the czar had raised during boyhood, in his retreat at Presbrazinski, during the regency of his sister Sophia.



marriages with the native Russians. To enlighten the obtuse ignorance of both priests and people, the czar also caused the Bible to be translated into the Russian language, and diffused among the people. The clergy were furious: they resorted both to maledictions and prophecies; but Peter was unmoved.

At the commencement of the year 1700, the first of a new century, the czar altered the calendar, in order to assimilate it to that of modern Europe. Before that time, the Russians began their year on the 1st of September, because they considered the world was no doubt created in autumn, the season when the fruits of the earth were in their full maturity; never suspecting, as has been observed, that the autumn of one part of the world might be the spring of another. Peter ordained that in future the year should commence, as in other parts of Europe, on the 1st of January. He did not introduce the Gregorian calendar, because it was at that day rejected by the English mathematicians, but adopted instead the old Julian one; an unfortunate circumstance, by which a disparity of eleven days now exists between Russian dates and those of other European nations. Peter celebrated this alteration by some public festivities and solemnities. The people, however, were averse to it, as, for a time, it introduced confusion into their calculations and commercial accounts. The peasantry were astonished at the power of the czar, who they fancied had, in some inexplicable way, altered the course of the sun; and some old-fashioned folks obstinately adhered to the former mode of computing; but, at length, a uniformity was attained.

The Russians were a heavy and unsocial people. In conformity with the Asiatic custom, they kept their wives and daughters in a state of complete seclusion. Married women were not permitted to appear in public without their husbands; while at home they were shut up in the back part of the house. Necessarily, women degenerated, both morally and intellectually; and the softening influence which in other countries they shed upon society, was altogether lost. Indeed, in Russia, at this period, social intercourse may be said to have had no existence. The marriage customs of the people, also, were remarkably barbarous and Asiatic. Young people were married without any previous acquaintance with each other; and the bridegroom was not even

allowed to see his bride until the ceremony was over. Mutual affection was, of course, rendered an impossibility before marriage, and merely a chance after it. The parties had been united from convenience, and in accordance with the will of the parents, who sometimes even sold the bride to her future husband. The many small sweet courtesies which, in civilised society, form the current coin between the sexes, and exert an immense influence in the way of humanising and elevating them, had no place in such a system. In fact, marriage could only have been regarded as a license for the gratification of those passions which the young had hitherto been taught to restrain.

The czar abolished this uncouth and unreasonable custom, and decreed that marriages should not take place without a previous acquaintance of at least six weeks between the bride and bridegroom. But little opposition was offered to this change, and the young people were highly pleased with it. It gave them a choice where, hitherto, none existed, and raised them in the social scale. It was now necessary to give the opposite sexes an opportunity of meeting and becoming acquainted with each other. For this purpose, Peter established regular evening assemblies amongst the families of the aristocracy and the wealthy, knowing that the custom once introduced, would find its way, in some form, down even to the lowest circles of society. For the government of these, Peter issued a code of regulations. The assemblies were to commence at four in the afternoon, and close at ten at night; and to be free, not only to all persons of rank and respectability, but also to their wives and daughters. The guests were at liberty to come and go as they pleased; but the host was not obliged to receive or wait upon them. Still he was to provide them with chairs, lights, and refreshments. One apartment was to be set aside for dancing; another for cards, chess, and draughts; and a third for smoking. The code also instructed the visitors to bow on entering or leaving the room, and many minute directions were given on the subject of personal behaviour. The penalty for violating any of these was a boorish one, the offender being compelled to drink the contents of a large tumbler of brandy, called the "great eagle." These changes won over the women, who from that time exerted themselves to bring the czar's innovations into favour.



The mind of Peter was a comprehensive one, and few things escaped his observation. Anything which he felt would tend to the improvement of the people, he introduced into the country. He established an observatory and a public theatre at Moscow; for, prior to his time, nothing but the puerile and vulgar miracle plays were performed in Russia. He improved the roads, and caused posts, marking the distances, to be placed on them at stated intervals. He erected hospitals, almshouses, and other humanising institutions; and reforms came so rapidly, that the slow Russian mind was almost in a

state of bewilderment. The people hardly knew what was right and what was wrong; but, though they parted from their old customs with regret, they gradually perceived that the new ones were calculated to add both to their social happiness and commercial prosperity. The clergy were the most strenuous opponents of this great social reformation, and preached and argued vehemently against it; but Peter exposed the shallowness of their reasoning, and turned them into ridicule. He afterwards retaliated in another way: but of his great church reforms we shall speak presently.

## CHAPTER XX.

PETER ENTERS INTO AN UNJUST LEAGUE AGAINST CHARLES XII. OF SWEDEN; CHARLES INFLICTS A TERRIBLE DEFEAT ON THE RUSSIANS AT NARVA; THE CZAR IMPROVES THE DISCIPLINE OF HIS TROOPS; THE RUSSIANS OBTAIN A VICTORY OVER THE SWEDES; SACK OF MARIENBURG; MARTHA THE ORPHAN, WHO AFTERWARDS BECAME THE EMPRESS CATHERINE; MENTSCHIKOFF; CAPTURE OF ROTTEBURG AND NIENESCHANTZ; THE CZAR FOUNDS ST. PETERSBURG; HE FORTIFIES OTHER CITIES; DORPT AND NARVA ARE TAKEN BY THE RUSSIANS.

To a period of social reform succeeded one of warlike struggle. Peter had concluded a truce of thirty years with the Turks, and he was thus left free to pursue his ambitious views in reference to extending his dominions to the shores of the Baltic. At this time, certain events were in progress which afforded the czar some shadowy sort of excuse for aggression.

In the year 1697, Charles XII., then only in his fifteenth year, and not suspected of possessing those great military talents, and that fearless audacity, by which he for so long kept the north of Europe in a state of tumult, ascended the throne of Sweden. On his accession, he found himself not only the absolute and undisturbed master of Sweden and Finland, but also of Livonia, Carelia, Ingria, Wismar, Wibourg, the islands of Rugen and Oesal, and the finest part of Pomerania, together with the duchy of Bremen and Verdun—all of them the conquests of his ancestors, secured to the crown by the fact of possession, by the treaties of Munster and Oliva, and supported by the terror of the Swedish arms. All this in the hands of a mere boy! and one who had revealed so little of his real character, that he was presumed to be indolent

and of a mean capacity. The temptation was great to surrounding sovereigns; for princes seldom consider the injustice of an act which enriches them at the expense of their neighbours. By the time Charles had reached his eighteenth year, a league was formed against him by Frederick IV., king of Denmark; Augustus, elector of Saxony and king of Poland; and the czar Peter of Russia; their object being to dismember Sweden, and to take back from that country all that had been obtained from them by conquest or ceded by capitulation. Poland wanted Livonia and Esthonia; Denmark, the provinces of Holstein and Schleswig; while the czar desired to obtain possession of Ingria and Carelia, which lay in his way to the Baltic.

This triple confederacy was entered into in the year 1700. The Swedes were an eminently courageous people; but so formidable a league against them, created alarm in the council and the nation, the more so as all their distinguished generals who had attained celebrity under Gustavus Adolphus were since dead. One day, when the council were deliberating on their dangerous situation, the young king Charles rose, and observed, with a grave and assured



air—"Gentlemen, I am resolved never to begin an unjust war; but never to finish an unjust war but with the destruction of my enemies. My resolution is fixed; I will march and attack the first who shall declare war; and when I have conquered him, I hope to strike terror into the rest."

Charles more than fulfilled this proud assertion: he first turned his arms against Denmark, besieged Copenhagen, and within six weeks compelled Frederick to sue for peace. At the same time, Augustus of Poland laid siege to the town of Riga, the capital of Livonia; but was so vigorously opposed, that he caught eagerly at a transparent pretext for retiring. The struggle, therefore, lay chiefly between Charles and Peter, the two most remarkable men in Europe.

The czar led an army of 60,000 men into Ingria, and laid siege to the small town of Narva. The time was ill-chosen, for it was during the month of October, in a climate of remarkable severity, within thirty degrees of the Pole. Notwithstanding the apparent strength of Peter's army, it contained but 12,000 disciplined soldiers, who, though robust and personally brave, were far inferior to the Swedes in all those matters which distinguish veteran troops. In fact, they were untried on the field, and had been used chiefly as a military police. The rest were mere barbarians, drawn from forest villages, clothed with the skins of wild beasts, and many of them armed only with bows and arrows, or with clubs. The czar's army was also attended by 150 pieces of cannon; but there was not one person who well understood artillery to direct it. Thus, though Narva was almost without fortifications, and contained only a garrison of 1,000 men, it successfully resisted the attacks of the barbarian host which lay intrenched before it.

Ten weeks passed away, and then the czar learned that Charles was approaching to the relief of the town. The young Swedish monarch was followed only by 8,000 men; but they were veteran soldiers, and flushed with recent victory. Notwithstanding his immense numerical superiority, Peter exhibited more prudence than was quite consistent with the natural fearlessness of his nature. Not satisfied with the forces he had already with him, he ordered the advance of another considerable body of troops, then stationed at Novgorod. As they did not arrive so soon as he desired,

he left the camp to hasten their movements, resigning the command to the Duke de Croi (a Flemish officer) and Prince Dolgorouki. Perhaps he was satisfied that he might leave the progress of the siege with perfect safety, as Charles would have to cut his way through three small Russian armies before he could arrive at Narva. Be this as it may, his absence assisted to bring defeat and—considering the nature of the defeat—disgrace upon his troops and nation.

Charles and his 8,000 Swedes dispersed the first of Peter's advanced posts, consisting of 5,000 men, who, falling back in confusion, threw the others into a panic, and all fled precipitately to the intrenched camp. Charles, immediately on his arrival, notwithstanding the fatigue of his troops, gave orders for the attack of a camp consisting of more than 60,000 Russians, and defended by 150 pieces of cannon. The famous battle of Narva occurred on the 30th of November. It was commenced during a blinding snow-storm, which blew directly in the faces of the Russians, and effectually concealed the smallness of the Swedish force. Jealousies existed between the Russian commanders: the Duke de Croi issued orders which Prince Dolgorouki refused to execute; and their troops were in a state of confusion before the conflict began. To such an extent was this carried, that the Russians rose against the German officers, and massacred several of them. No man was at his post, and the Russian army became little more than an armed mob. The Swedes opened the battle with a furious cannonade, and soon succeeded in making a breach in the Russian intrenchments. They charged with their bayonets; and for half-an-hour the Russians fought from behind their trenches; but then they began to yield. Charles was struck in the neck by a spent bullet, and had his horse killed under him—incidents which in no way disturbed his composure. The engagement lasted for about three hours, when the intrenchments were forced upon every side, and the Russians, seized with panic, fell into irredeemable confusion. Many threw themselves into the river Narva, where great numbers were drowned; others flung away their arms and begged for quarter upon their knees. The Duke de Croi and the German officers, as much afraid of the mutinous Russians as they were of the Swedes, surrendered themselves to Charles. Prince Dolgorouki and the principal Russian offi-



cers did the same. Charles received them with politeness; and with an affected disdain of the power of Russia, only detained the generals as his prisoners. The subaltern officers and soldiers were disarmed, conducted to the banks of the Narva, and directed to return into their own country. This was an error which it is probable that Charles afterwards repented of: the Russians, whom he now so contemptuously dismissed, afterwards became disciplined and formidable troops. The Swedish victor captured all the Russian artillery and magazines, together with 120 transports laden with provisions. The Russians lost 6,000 men, the Swedes but 1,200. Narva was delivered, and Charles entered it in triumph. The shattered remains of the recently confident army of the czar dared no longer show themselves.

Charles, instead of pursuing his advantage, which might have led him as a victor even to the gates of Moscow, where he could have dictated any peace he pleased, turned off into Poland to punish Augustus for the part that monarch had taken in the confederacy against him. The news of the Russian defeat reached Peter as he was approaching to Narva with the additional forces—amounting to 40,000 men—that he had been in quest of. He would not risk the loss of this army also, but resolved on returning to Moscow. He bore his reverse as great minds almost always bear calamity—with fortitude. He had been defeated, but not necessarily ruined; and he resolved to persevere incessantly in raising his troops to a higher state of discipline. His designs on Ingria were not altered by the severe check he had received. “I know very well,” he observed, “that the Swedes will beat us for a long time; but, in the end, they themselves will teach us to beat them.”

The inhabitants of Moscow did not receive this national chastisement with so much dignity and resignation. Such was the ignorant vanity of the people, that they supposed that those who conquered them must have been assisted by diabolical agency, and that the Swedes were magicians. So general was this opinion, that a Russian bishop composed a form of prayer to St. Nicholas, imploring him to baffle the infernal arts of their enemies. This document was read in all the churches; and we introduce it here as an instance of the ignorance and superstition of the Russian people and clergy at the commencement of the

seventeenth century:—“O Thou! who art our perpetual consoler in all our adversities, great St. Nicholas! infinitely powerful! by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, kneelings, bowings, and thanksgivings, that thou hast thus abandoned us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, dreadful, and unconquerable destroyers; when, like lions and bears who have lost their young, they have attacked, terrified, wounded, and killed by thousands, us thy people. As it is impossible that this can be done without sorcery and enchantment, we beseech thee, O great St. Nicholas! to be our champion and our standard-bearer, to deliver us from this tribe of sorcerers, and to drive them far from our frontiers, with the recompense that is their due.” The Russians have made some progress during the last century and a-half. They would no longer write such barbarous stuff as the preceding.

Charles’s expedition into Poland gave Peter time to recover himself, and repair the losses he had experienced. Returning to Moscow, he occupied himself during the winter in raising and drilling troops. He also had 143 pieces of cannon cast, to replace those which were lost at Narva. Metal was requisite to furnish this new artillery; and, to obtain it, he ordered a number of the bells of churches and monasteries to be melted down, and converted into instruments of war. Such was his activity in this direction, that in the spring of 1701 he had an artillery consisting of 100 pieces of cannon, 142 field-pieces, twelve mortars, and thirteen howitzers. All these preparations for renewing the war he superintended in person; and the most industrious man in the empire was the czar. But this military activity did not withdraw Peter’s attention from those arts which seldom flourish except in times of peace. At the same time he imported sheep and shepherds from Saxony, erected establishments for the manufacture of linen and paper, fostered the civilising art of printing, and invited to Russia many foreign artisans, consisting of smiths, braziers, and artificers of every description. He also employed workmen to explore the mines of Siberia. Thus, at the same time, endeavouring both to enrich and defend his dominions.

During this period, Peter entered into a further treaty with the King of Denmark, who engaged to assist him with three regi-



ments of foot and three of cavalry—an undertaking which his fear of Charles XII. never permitted him to fulfil. As soon as this treaty was signed, the czar hurried to Birzen, on the frontiers of Courland and Lithuania, where he had an interview with Augustus, king of Poland. It was conducted without any of those formalities which usually interrupt the intercourse of monarchs, and prolong the business to be settled between them. Engagements for mutual assistance were entered into; but such was the precarious position of Augustus, that he was unable to fulfil his part of the contract. The Polish diet, jealous both of the Saxon troops of Augustus and the Russian troops of the czar, refused to sanction a league that they felt must involve them in difficulties. Peter soon saw that he must depend upon himself alone, and he resolved to do so. After five days passed in revelry (for the czar could never overcome his tendency to excess and debauchery), the monarchs parted. The king of Sweden, having left a body of forces on the Russian frontiers of his dominions to preserve them from attack, pursued a course of victory and intrigue in Poland, where he had resolved to dethrone King Augustus, and then push his way to Moscow, and punish the czar.

While Charles was occupied in ravaging Poland, Peter was employed in strengthening Russia. During the year 1701, the czar caused 150 half-galleys, each carrying about fifty men, to be built on the great lake Peipus, in order to prevent Swedish vessels from insulting the province of Novgorod, and to be within a proper distance for making a descent upon the Swedish coasts. These vessels were also intended as a nursery for seamen—a service in which they were exceedingly useful. The year 1701 was a time of preparation with Peter: his troops were learning war as an art; and they made so great a progress, that in some border skirmishes which took place between them and the Swedes, they sometimes had the advantage. The czar himself was indefatigable. He travelled constantly between Pleskow, Moscow, and Archangel, and succeeded in imparting to his recently-defeated troops a spirit of enthusiasm.

In the following year (1702) the war was actively renewed; for on the 1st of January a battle took place near Dorpt, on the borders of Livonia; when the Russians, after a conflict of four hours, obtained a victory

over the Swedes. It is said that 3,000 of the latter perished; while the Russians, who took four colours, lost but 1,000 men. General Scheremetof, who commanded, was made a field-marshal; and the Russian clergy, conceiving that St. Nicholas was reconciled to them, offered a public thanksgiving accordingly. Several petty engagements took place by water between the Russian and Swedish vessels on the lakes Peipus and Ladoga. Though commonly terminating in favour of the Swedes, yet the Russians had the advantage occasionally; and in the month of May, a Swedish frigate was captured. During July, Peter received intelligence that a Swedish fleet was on its way to the North Sea, for the purpose of destroying Archangel. Starting instantly for that remote city, he put it into a state of defence; and having prevented the landing of the Swedes, drew the plan of a citadel, called the New Dwina; and after laying the first stone, returned to the seat of war.

Marshal Scheremetof having obtained another triumph over a body of Swedes commanded by Schlippenbach, acquired the reputation of being a great general. Taking advantage of his success, he laid the whole country under contribution, and marched upon Marienburg, a little town on the confines of Livonia and Ingria. The garrison, satisfied that resistance would be useless, immediately capitulated, on condition that they and the inhabitants should be allowed to depart unmolested. The terms were granted; but an intemperate Swedish officer set fire to the powder-magazine, which, in exploding, killed many both of the Russians and of his own countrymen. The former, irritated at this act of treachery, fell upon the garrison, destroyed the town, and carried off the inhabitants.

Among these unfortunate people was a young peasant girl named Martha, of about sixteen years of age. She was an orphan, and had been brought up by the Lutheran minister of Marienburg, in whose household she fulfilled the duties of a servant. It is said, that only the day before, she had been married to a sergeant in the Swedish army, who was killed in the confusion, and that when she was brought into the presence of one of the Russian generals named Bauer, she was in tears for the loss of her new-made and early-lost husband. Martha was graceful and interesting, and had a peculiarly soft and fascinating expression of



countenance. Bauer was struck with her appearance, and, being a single man, he took her to his home, where she became his housekeeper, and, as it is generally supposed, his mistress. The general afterwards denied this circumstance; but it was when he had powerful motives for doing so. The world believed that Martha lived with the general on terms of more than common familiarity; and we do not see any reason to suppose that, in this instance, the world was wrong. Prince Mentschikoff, seeing the pretty widowed orphan at the house of the general, was likewise impressed by her beauty and amiability, and begged Bauer to part with her. The general was not disposed to deny anything to a prince, especially to a rising prince, who stood high in the favour of the czar. He acceded to the request, and Martha then became the avowed mistress of Mentschikoff. In this capacity she remained until the year 1704, when the czar accidentally beheld her, and was as much struck with her appearance as either Bauer or Mentschikoff. Entering into conversation with Martha, Peter soon felt strongly attracted towards her: the first impression was not only sustained, but heightened; and the Livonian orphan left the bed of Mentschikoff to share that of the czar. In the year 1696, Peter had put away his wife Eudoxia Lapuchin, whose jealousy and bigoted opposition to his reforms excited his disgust and anger; and he eventually married Martha, to whom he gave the more dignified name of Catherine. "There had been instances before this," says Voltaire, "of private persons being raised to the throne. Nothing was more common in Russia, and in all the Asiatic kingdoms, than marriages between sovereigns and their subjects. But that a poor stranger, who had been discovered amidst the ruins of a plundered town, should become the absolute sovereign of that very empire into which she was led captive, is an incident which fortune and merit have never before produced in the annals of the world."

The rise of Prince Mentschikoff was only something less remarkable than that of Martha—or rather of Catherine, as we must henceforth call her. His parents were extremely humble people, vassals of the monastery of Cosmopoli. When their son had reached the age of thirteen, they sent him to Moscow to get his living as best he could. Being received into the service of a pastrycook, he went about the

streets to sell puffs and cakes. Having an agreeable voice, he used to attract notice to his humble dainties by singing ballads. One day the czar happened to hear the boy, and being pleased with his appearance and voice, sent for him, and asked if he would sell his pies and his basket. The young itinerant pastrycook answered modestly, that his pies were for sale, but he must ask his master's leave to sell his basket; though, as everything belonged to his prince, he needed only to lay his commands upon him. This answer further pleased the czar, who ordered the boy to come to court, where he was at first employed in some mean station. As he exhibited considerable address and capacity, Peter made him groom of his bedchamber; and thence gradually raised him to the highest preferments. As if this career was not in itself sufficiently romantic, a wild story has been related of Mentschikoff having, while a pastrycook's boy, saved the czar from being poisoned by a discontented boyard; but it bears an air of improbability, and is generally discountenanced.

We have, though indeed inevitably, been digressing slightly from the strict chronological march of historic facts. This is sometimes necessary for the sake of grace and pictorial effect, and also for the avoidance of repetition; but woe be to the writer who does not keep his facts in good chronological order: then, like ill-disciplined troops, they fall into confusion, perplex the general who has assumed to arrange them, and bring him to disgrace and defeat.

We diverged at the point where, in the year 1702, Marshal Scheremetof had marched upon and destroyed the town of Marienburg, on the confines of Livonia and Ingria. After this success, Peter pushed forward his operations in the direction of the river Neva, which connects Lake Ladoga with the Baltic Sea, and at the mouth of which now stands the large and elegant city, the foundations of which Peter was so soon to lay. Near that point where the river Neva left the lake, was an island, on which stood Rotteburg, a strongly-fortified town, commanding the lake. This town was indispensable to Peter in carrying out the extensive design he had formed, and he resolved to obtain possession of it. His troops besieged the town from the 18th of September until the 12th of October. Three breaches having been made, the Russians gave the assault; but such was the



desperate valour of the Swedish garrison, that though reduced to only eighty-three effective men, they yet obtained an honourable capitulation, even when victory was almost in the grasp of their assailants. Peter gained what he wanted; but the siege was by no means a very brilliant triumph, in a military sense. He, however, chose so to consider it, and distributed rewards to the officers and soldiers by whom it was conducted. Others, who had run away during the assault, were subject to a severe punishment. They were put to a whimsically-ignominious death: their comrades spat in their faces, and then shot them. The czar caused the fortifications of Rotteburg to be repaired; and changed its name into that of Schlüsselburg, or City of the Key, because it was regarded as the key of Ingria and Finland. Prince Mentschikoff, formerly the pie-boy, but now grown a very good officer, was made the first Russian governor of the conquered town. Charles XII. thought very little of this. He regarded the Russians with contempt, and fancied that he could readily drive them out as soon as he returned from Poland. His easy conquest at the battle of Narva had given him a false estimate of his enemies.

The depth of winter produced some brief pause in the execution of the czar's designs with respect to his intended city near the shores of the Baltic. He therefore spent the early part of the year 1703 at Moscow, where, however, he by no means gave himself up to luxurious ease, but employed his time in seeing that his new regulations were carried into effect, and in improving the civil as well as military government. Even in his amusements he promoted those more social and rational customs which he desired to introduce amongst his unwilling subjects. At the marriage of one of his jesters, he caused all the nobles and their ladies to be invited; and gave, at the same time, a command that everybody should be dressed in the ancient fashion. The dinner was placed on the table in the uncouth manner that was customary a hundred years before. Although the cold was intense, he would not permit a fire to be kindled, because there had formerly been a superstitious custom of not lighting a fire on a wedding-day. Neither was any wine permitted, because the Russians, in old times, used only to drink mead and brandy; and he would not suffer any other liquor. The shivering and disgusted guests complained to the

czar of this cheerless treatment; but he replied, in a jocular tone, "Your ancestors did so, and surely ancient customs are always the best." This covert sarcasm, added to the practical lesson which preceded it, discouraged the complaints of those who were always ready to prefer the customs of the past, and taught them to believe that changes might possibly be improvements.

Returning to the frontiers of Sweden, the czar visited the dockyards of Olonetz, to inspect the ships he had directed to be built there, and the foundries he had established in that town for the manufacture of arms. The object of Peter was to obtain the secure occupation of both shores of the Neva. It was therefore necessary to expel the Swedes from all places in the neighbourhood, and to take or destroy all the fortified posts they held in Ingria and Carelia. The most important of the latter was a fortress called Nienschantz, situated near Lake Ladoga, and not far from the Neva. As Peter laid siege to this fortress by land, and prevented its receiving supplies by water, it surrendered on the 12th of May. Two Swedish vessels that came too late to relieve the garrison, were also captured by the ships of the czar.

Peter now resolved at once to erect the new capital of his empire, although the very ground on which it was to stand did not belong to him, and would have to be contested for with a powerful rival, who knew no sense of fear, and loved war as a pastime. Advancing up the Neva, in the direction of the sea, he selected a wild and marshy island, covered with brushwood, and inhabited only by a few fishermen. The place was unpromising, and extremely ill-adapted for the purpose for which the czar intended it. So low was it, as to be little better than a muddy swamp in summer, and a frozen pool in winter. Such a situation was necessarily unhealthy; and the surrounding country was covered with marshes, and almost impenetrable forests—the haunts of wolves and bears. The place was also subject to inundations when the tide set in more fiercely than usual from the Baltic: but all these considerations were overlooked by Peter in his anxiety to obtain a great fortified seaport.

On the 27th of May, 1703, was laid the foundations of the fortress of St. Petersburg, the nucleus of the magnificent city which now bears that name. The difficult-



ties to be overcome were stupendous. The neighbouring country was one vast morass, intersected by numerous branches of the Neva, and countless pools of water.\* Every-where there was water, and deadly miasma arising from it; while the soft spongy soil seemed to defy the skill of man to convert it into a solid foundation. As for stone, the neighbouring country was actually destitute of it; and the new fortress was built with the stone taken from that recently captured at Nientschantz. Again, the population was so scanty, that it could not furnish labourers; and such as were at once obtained, did not possess the tools necessary for the accomplishment of their work. But Peter was not to be baffled, and his energy soon overcame all obstacles. Workmen were sent for from all parts of the empire; and a vast concourse of labourers was soon collected, including in its motley groups, Russians, Tartars, Cossacks, Calmucks, and Finns. These poor people were employed in deepening the channels of the river, and raising the levels of the land destined for the site of the city. Unhappy men! the new capital may, without a metaphor, be said to be constructed upon their bones. Such was the severity of the weather, the unhealthiness of the place, the hardness of the toil, and the scarcity of provisions, that no less than 100,000 of them perished during the first year. But such a powerful fact as this did not affect the iron nerves of the czar. He was eager and inflexible, and the work went rapidly on. The fortress was completed within five months; and, at the expiration of a year, 30,000 wooden houses and huts had arisen from the dreary swamp, whose yielding soil was hardened with human bones. The beginning was humble enough; and few, even of the idealists and dreamers of the world, could have conceived that this new-born city was, at no distant time, to challenge the admiration of the world for its gorgeous palaces, its magnificent cathedrals, its imperial academies and libraries, its gigantic squares, its massive quays, its superb theatres, its pleasure-gardens, and all that conduces to the brilliancy of an exotic civilisation! Yet St. Petersburg was but slowly

populated; and even now its inhabitants can scarcely be said to be numerous.

At the time of Peter's death, in 1725, it contained 75,000 inhabitants: these had increased to 110,000 on the accession of Catherine II.; and it is now about 500,000; of which number two-thirds are males. Some authorities add, that the men are remarkable for their good looks, and the women for the contrary.

While Peter was struggling to subdue the wildness of nature in this locality, and wooden houses were daily rising above the swamp, he devoted his attention to securing the safety of his new city. Charles XII. was not a monarch from whom territory could be filched or wrested with impunity; and other enemies might strike at the unfinished sea-cradle of Russia, if it remained undefended. The czar, therefore, diligently examined the neighbourhood himself, and, selecting a little island lying near the mouth of the river Neva, he gave it the name of Cronstadt; and, making a model of the fortifications he designed to be erected there, employed Prince Mentschikoff to carry the works into execution. With what success this was accomplished, the present world-famous seaward defences of St. Petersburg attest.

In the month of November the czar returned to Moscow, where he had again to encounter the discontent of the people. Noble, priest, and citizen were alike dissatisfied at the erection of a new city on so unfavourable a site; where winter predominates over eight months of the year; in which rye was an article of garden culture, and a bee-hive an absolute curiosity. The nobles dreaded that the wealth and dignity of Moscow would be transferred to the dismal islands of the Neva; while the poor looked upon the place with a superstitious horror, on account of the enormous amount of life sacrificed in its erection. The new city, however, prospered, notwithstanding the many ominous predictions that it would soon be engulfed beneath the waters of the Neva. Five months from the day of its foundation, a Dutch vessel, freighted with merchandise, entered the river. Presents were made to the captain to encourage

\* Lady Eastlake remarks—"No one can judge of the daring position of St. Petersburg, who has not mounted one of the artificial heights (such as the gilt spire of the admiralty), and viewed the immense body of water in which she floats like a bark overladen with precious goods; while the autumn

waves, as if maddened by the prospect of winter's long imprisonment, play wild pranks with her resistless shores, deriding her false foundations, and overturning in a few hours the laborious erections of as many years." St. Petersburg has been compared to a floating city of palaces.



others to follow his example, which they speedily did. The third ship, however, that entered the port was from England. These commercial visits gave some hope to the downcast inhabitants, whose compulsory residence in the new city was by no means to their taste. Indeed, after the departure of Peter for Moscow, the priests tried their hands at a miracle, which was intended to be a visible expression of the assumed displeasure of the Omnipotent. A church was amongst the earliest of the buildings erected; and an image of the Virgin, with which it was adorned, was seen to shed tears, in pity—so said the pious men—for the sufferings of the people. It caused great excitement until the return of the czar, who, being a little sceptical in such matters, caused the image to be taken down and carefully examined. The vulgar fraud was soon exposed; and the mechanical contrivance by which the figure was made to appear to weep, shown to the simple people.

The czar could afford to despise opposition even of a more serious kind than this. His power was rapidly increasing; and notwithstanding his great outlays, his personal expenditure was so trivial, that he was enabled to accumulate wealth. Almost at the same time that he was employed in the erection of a new capital, he fortified Novgorod, Pleskow, Kief, Smolensk, Azoff, and Archangel. He also bestowed a considerable subsidy upon Augustus, the king of Poland, to enable him to oppose the Swedish monarch. Yet he informed Cornelius de Bruyer (a Dutch traveller, with whom Peter would frequently converse with familiarity), that after providing for all the expenses of the war, he had still 300,000 roubles in his coffers.

The Swedish gladiator Charles, who still preserved his contempt both for the Russians and their ruler, said that Peter might amuse himself as he thought fit in building a city, as he should soon take it away from him, and set fire to his wooden houses. The Turkish government, however, took a different view of the proceedings of the czar: the fortifications he had erected at Azoff and in its neighbourhood excited their alarm; and the sultan sent an ambassador to complain of these warlike preparations. Peter replied, that he was as much a sovereign in his own dominions as the great signior was in Turkey, and that it could be no violation of the peace to render Russia respectable on the Euxine.

A reference to the map will show the reader that Narva, where Peter's forces had been so ignominiously defeated by the Swedes, lay in dangerous proximity to the new capital. To secure the safety of the latter, and to wipe off the disgrace he had formerly received at Narva, the czar resolved on another attempt to make himself master of that town. In the spring of 1704, he divided the military force of Russia into three portions. One he sent to the assistance of King Augustus, whom Charles had succeeded in driving from his throne; a second he led in person to accomplish the reduction of Narva; while a third he placed under the direction of General Scheremetof, for the purpose of laying siege to Dorpt, a town in Esthonia, in which the famous Gustavus Adolphus had established a university.

Dorpt, after holding out for six weeks, was taken by a stratagem. The Russian general disguised two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry in Swedish uniforms. These pretended Swedes attacked the trenches, and the Russians feigned a flight. The garrison of the town, believing that some succour had arrived, were deceived into making a sortie, when the false attackers and the attacked united their forces, and fell upon the astonished Swedes. So great was the slaughter which followed this surprise, that the town capitulated on the 23rd of July, 1704, and thus avoided the horrors of an assault.

The czar was equally successful at Narva; for he was a far more formidable enemy than when his troops had been so severely chastised there by Charles in 1700. "He not only," says Voltaire, "began to be a good soldier, but he likewise taught the art of war to the Muscovites; discipline was established throughout his troops; he had able engineers, an artillery well served, and many good officers; and he likewise knew the art of subsisting his armies. Some of his generals had learned both how to fight, and also, as occasion required, to decline fighting." The siege of Narva was conducted under the personal superintendence of Peter; and when, on the 20th of August, it was taken by assault, three famous bastions, respectively called Victory, Honour, and Glory, were carried sword-in-hand. Bursting into the town, the besiegers devoted themselves to plunder, obscenity, and slaughter, without the slightest pity or compunction. Such were the atrocities of the



Russian troops, that even the stern czar was moved to disgust and indignation. To his honour it must be recorded, that he ran from place to place to stop the massacre. He saved unhappy women from the hands of his brutal soldiers, who, after having violated them, were about to cut their throats. Several of these ruffians, blinded by their beastly fury, perhaps did not recognise the czar; and refusing to obey his commands, he cut them down with his own hands. Then entering the town-house, where great numbers of the citizens had retired for shelter, he threw his reeking weapon upon the table, and exclaimed, "My sword is not stained with the blood of the inhabitants, but with that of my own soldiers, which I have spilt to save your lives."—"If," remarked one of his biographers, "the czar had always observed this humanity, he would have been the first of men." On this occasion, he seems to have been much impressed by the horrors of war, especially as waged by barbarous troops. It is reported, that when Count de Horn, the governor of

the town, was brought before Peter, the czar angrily struck him on the face, and observed, "It is you, and you only, who are the cause of so many calamities. Ought you not to have capitulated when you had no hope of assistance?"

This last acquisition made Peter master of the whole of Ingria, the government of which province he conferred upon Mentschikoff, now raised to the rank of a prince. The elevation of this man from the streets of Moscow to so exalted a position, was not merely a point of eccentricity in the czar. He intended it as a reproof to his ignorant and indolent nobility, and as an assurance to them that merit and assiduity were the only passports to his favour. Under him, the old system of conferring honours and rewards had ceased to exist. The ancient nobility were discontented; but a spirit of emulation was at length excited among the people, who began to perceive that the path to affluence and distinction was open to the gifted, no matter how humble their origin or obscure their station.

## CHAPTER XXI.

ST. PETERSBURG THREATENED BY A SWEDISH FLEET; CAMPAIGN IN COURLAND; BATTLE WITH THE SWEDES; MURDER OF GENERAL PATKUL; AFFAIRS OF POLAND; CHARLES XII. RESOLVES TO INVADE RUSSIA AND DETHRONE THE CZAR; THE LATTER DRIVEN FROM GRODNO; ENGAGEMENT AT BEREZINA; THE RUSSIANS RETREAT, FOLLOWED BY THE SWEDES; ENGAGEMENT NEAR MOHILO; CHARLES ENTERS THE UKRAINE; BRILLIANT CONFLICT OF THE SWEDES, UNDER GENERAL LEWENHAUPT, WITH THE RUSSIAN ARMY; CHARLES DISAPPOINTED OF HIS SUPPLIES, AND OF THE AID HE EXPECTED FROM MAZEPPA; CHARLES LAYS SIEGE TO PULTOWA; PETER ADVANCES TO ITS ASSISTANCE; THE FAMOUS BATTLE OF PULTOWA, AND RUIN OF CHARLES; MILITARY SOLEMNITY AT MOSCOW

It was Peter's policy to keep Charles XII. as long as possible in Poland, in the hope that he might exhaust his strength, or perhaps even receive a check which would cripple his power. With this design, he had no sooner secured himself in Ingria, than he made an offer of further assistance to the dethroned king, Augustus. In the August of 1704, Peter sent General Repnin from the borders of Lithuania to the assistance of Augustus, with a body of 6,000 horse and 6,000 foot. The autumn of this year the czar spent in improving his new city, or rather colony—for it was as yet no more—of St. Petersburg: the winter he passed in Moscow; on his return into which, according to his general custom, he made a triumphal entry.

As the winter of 1704-5 melted into spring, Peter prepared to take the field himself in Poland, for the double purpose of assisting his helpless ally Augustus, and of weakening his warlike rival Charles. While thus engaged, Cronstadt and St. Petersburg were threatened by a formidable Swedish fleet, consisting of two-and-twenty ships of war, carrying from fifty-four to sixty-four guns each, besides six frigates, two bomb-ketches, and two fire-ships. The Swedes landed their troops on the little island of Kotin, but were received with so unexpected and precise a fire, that they retreated in confusion, abandoning their dead, and leaving 300 prisoners in the hands of the enemy. Two other descents were made; but they were equally unsuccessful. At length the



hostile fleet, which had hovered about the coast, seeking for an opportunity of striking at St. Petersburg, being thus baffled and repulsed, retired; and the new city, yet only rising from its swampy bed, was saved.

In the meantime Peter had marched into Courland, where he was encountered and defeated by a Swedish army under General Lewenhaupt. So severe was this check, that the czar lost about 5,000 men, together with all his artillery. Notwithstanding this and other reverses, Peter preserved the discipline of his forces, penetrated to Mitau, the capital of Courland, and compelled it to surrender by capitulation. His troops were beginning to show the results of that superior training to which they had been subjected. Since the taking of Narva, Peter had so repressed the plundering propensities of his troops, that when the Russian soldiers were appointed to guard the vaults in the castle of Mitau (the usual burying-place of the dukes of Courland), they, on finding that the bodies of those princes had been dragged out of their tombs, and stript of their ornaments, refused to undertake the charge until they had sent for a Swedish colonel, and induced him to sign a certificate that these depredations were the acts of his own countrymen.

At the approach of winter the czar again returned to Moscow, where his presence was required in consequence of an insurrection of an insignificant character. This he soon quelled; and then he might have obtained some repose from those incessant toils to which he was subjected, but that he received intelligence that Charles XII., at the head of a powerful army, was advancing upon Grodno, where the combined Russian and Saxon armies in the service of Augustus were encamped. Peter hurried to the spot occupied by the Swedes. A battle took place at Frauenstadt on the 12th of February, 1706. It scarcely lasted a quarter of an hour, by which time the Swedes were victors. So great was the disorder, and so sudden the panic in the ranks of the allied Russians and Saxons, that 7,000 loaded fuses were found on the field of battle, which they had thrown down without firing. The victory of the Swedes was complete; the slaughter of their foes terrible. Of 6,000 Russians in the army of Augustus, scarcely any escaped. The Swedes gave no quarter to the fallen, and were guilty of great atrocities. The czar

asserted, in a manifesto he published, that many of his soldiers who had been taken prisoners were murdered in cold blood three days after the battle. Doubtless, a savage spirit predominated on each side, and war was made even more than commonly terrible by the brutal passions of a barbarous soldiery.

Peter was not disheartened; misfortune lost its usually enfeebling influence when it assailed him. He raised more troops, and encouraged the dispirited Augustus to take advantage of the absence of Charles in Saxony, and again to enter Poland. Augustus yielded; but terrified by the success of the fierce Swede, he at last wrote a letter with his own hand to Charles, begging him to grant a peace. The terms of the latter were severe; the chief of them being, that he should for ever renounce the throne of Poland and the Russian alliance. To the expostulations of the plenipotentiaries of Augustus, the minister of Charles replied, "Such is the will of the king, my master; and he never changes his mind."

While these negotiations were being privately carried on, Prince Mentschikoff joined the forces of Augustus with 20,000 men, much to the confusion of the fugitive monarch, who, having resolved on submission, wished to be left to himself. Not only had he been dethroned by his enemy, but, should the negotiations be discovered, he was in danger of being taken prisoner by his ally. At this crisis, the consternation of Augustus was increased by the intelligence that 10,000 Swedes, under the command of General Meyerfeldt, were approaching to give him battle. To attack the Swedes, and either to win or lose the battle, would add to the complexities of his situation. He therefore sent a secret messenger to Meyerfeldt, informing him of the expected peace, and begging him to retire. Even this incident produced a result exactly the reverse of what was intended. The Swede thought that a snare was being laid to intimidate him, and therefore resolved on the attack. The battle took place; the Russians were the victors, and entered Warsaw in triumph. There the irresolute and humiliated Augustus was met by his own plenipotentiaries, who presented to him the treaty they had just concluded, by which he promised to give up all claim to the crown of Poland, and to abandon for ever his alliance with the Russians. Feeling that he could not struggle for any time



effectually against the power of Charles, he signed the treaty, and then set out to apologise in person to that monarch for having defeated his troops, and to endeavour to propitiate his favour. The two monarchs met without ceremony at a place called Gutersdorff. "Charles was, as usual, in his jack-boots, with a piece of black taffeta tied round his neck instead of a cravat; his clothes of coarse blue cloth, with gilt copper buttons. He had a long sword by his side, which had served him in the battle of Narva, and on the pommel of which he frequently leaned. The conversation turned wholly upon those jack-boots; Charles informed Augustus that he had not laid them aside for six years, except when he went to bed. These trifles were the only subjects of discourse between the two kings, one of whom had just deprived the other of his crown! Augustus, especially, spoke with an air of complaisance and satisfaction, which princes and men accustomed to the management of great affairs know how to assume amidst the most cruel mortifications. The two kings dined together twice. Charles always affected to give Augustus the right-hand; but so far from mitigating the rigour of his demands, he only increased their severity."\*

Augustus not only surrendered his crown, but he gave up to Charles the brave and unfortunate Livonian general, Patkul. This gentleman had, in consequence of a shameful injustice he experienced at the hands of the father of Charles, left the military service of Sweden for that of Russia; which, as he was not a native of either country, he had a right to do, if such was his desire. At this time he was acting with Augustus in the capacity of ambassador from the czar, in which character his person ought to have been regarded as secure from all outrage. The ungrateful Augustus arrested and gave him up to the vindictive Charles, whose troops had been beaten by his military genius; and the Swedish monarch not only condemned him to death, but caused him to be executed by the horrible and lingering mode of being broken on the wheel! The pretence for this shameful murder—the darkest blot on the character of Charles—was that Patkul was a rebel; which military authorities have decided he was not. Whatever had been his offence, his position as general and ambassador of the czar of Russia, ought to have exempted him from

such cruel ignominy. The fate of Patkul was as romantic as it was horrible: he was engaged to be married to a lady of high birth and great beauty, about the very time that this calamity came upon him. The brave man who had faced death with intrepidity in so many battles, melted into tears upon the bosom of the chaplain, as he confided to him the portrait of his beloved, entreating him to wait upon her, and impart all the consolation that lay in his power. The condemned officer had only been informed that he was to die; and when he saw the wheel to which he was to be bound, and the frightful nature of his punishment shot across his mind, he fell into convulsions, and dropt, shuddering, into the arms of the pitying and weeping minister.

The czar was disgusted at the weakness of Augustus, and furious at the conduct of Charles. The surrender of his ambassador by one monarch, and his execution by another, were violations of the law of nations, and insults to him as a sovereign. Prior to the death of General Patkul, the czar complained bitterly of these indignities to the several courts of Europe, and tried to induce them to interpose their mediation to procure the restoration of his ambassador, and to avert the affront which, in his person, was about to be offered to crowned heads. These appeals were without avail; Germany, England, and Holland were then engaged in a ruinous war against France, with the object of restraining the ambition of Louis XIV.: the monarchs of these countries also felt that Charles was a dangerous person to interfere with. Not one of the princes of Europe interposed in behalf of the unhappy Patkul, who was abandoned to the fate that the vengeance of Charles had condemned him to. Justly did Voltaire observe—"There is not a civilian in Europe, nay, there is not a slave, but must shudder with horror at this barbarous act of injustice." He added—"The splendour of high achievements used formerly to cover such cruelties; but now they are an indelible stain to military glory."

Poland had at this time two monarchs, and each of them almost powerless;—Augustus, whom Charles XII. had driven from the throne, and Stanislaus, whom he had placed upon it. The latter, though a prince of many virtues, was not willingly submitted to by the distracted nation on which he had been forced, and he was threatened with dethronement by Peter, who had re-

\* Voltaire's *Life of Charles XII.*



solved on the restoration of Augustus. At a meeting of the Polish nobles, the throne was declared vacant; and it was agreed that a diet should be assembled for the purpose of electing some one to fill it. So that Poland was on the point of having three kings at once, and under circumstances which would have perplexed the people as to whom their allegiance was due. As Augustus had renounced the protection of the czar, the latter favoured the project of a new election. Peter had obtained a considerable influence over many of the Polish nobles, and much weight was attached to his advice. It was therefore agreed that an interregnum should be declared, and the primate invested as regent until the result of the election was known.

Such was the state of affairs when, in the July of 1707, Stanislaus, who had been acknowledged by most of the sovereigns of Europe, advanced into Poland, accompanied by the famous general Renschild and sixteen regiments of Swedes. Wherever he came he was acknowledged as sovereign; and the discipline of his troops, which made the barbarity of the Russian soldiers more keenly felt, conciliated the affections of the people. Besides this, the great affability of Stanislaus won to his side most of the different factions; and a large sum of money he had brought with him, secured the greatest part of the army of the crown.

Charles, in his camp at Altranstad, was caressed and feared by nearly every sovereign of Europe. His intentions were matter of speculation to all the politicians of Europe. It was reported that he intended to join with France in humbling Austria; and our famous soldier, the Duke of Marlborough, visited the Swedish hero, to use his influence in preventing a design which would have been fatal to the interests of England and her allies in the war against France. Charles was not communicative. He thought the distinguished English general too courtier-like in his manners, and too foppish in his dress, for a soldier. But though Charles would not at all reveal his mind, the acute Marlborough divined it. He detected, in the brief observations of the Swede, a dislike to France; and he observed that the eyes of Charles kindled at the name of the czar, while a map of Russia also lay on the table before him. The Englishman was convinced that the real design and ambition of Charles was to dethrone the czar, as he had already done the king of Poland. In-

deed, Charles, who was prepared to take the field with an army of 45,000 men trained upon the battle-field, scarcely concealed his intention to make Russia the theatre of war. Afterwards he was remarkably explicit. To an attempt of the French ambassador to bring about a peace between Sweden and Russia, Charles answered proudly, that he would treat with the czar in the city of Moscow. When this insulting remark was repeated to Peter, he observed, "My brother Charles wants to act the part of Alexander, but he shall not find me a Darius."

Charles was at length ready to leave Saxony. While there, he had intimidated the pope, whom he treated with contempt; humbled the emperor Joseph; protected the Lutheran religion in the midst of the catholics; dethroned one king, crowned another, and made himself the terror of all the princes around him. Voltaire, in his life of this distinguished monarch, remarks—"The pleasures of Saxony, where he had remained inactive for a whole year, had by no means abated the austerity of his mode of living. He rode out thrice a-day; rose at four in the morning; dressed himself with his own hands; drank no wine; sat at table only a quarter of an hour; exercised his troops every day; and knew no other pleasure than that of making Europe tremble." He left Saxony in the September of 1707; his troops so enriched by its spoil, that it is said every soldier carried with him fifty crowns in ready money. It was his intention to invade Russia and dethrone the czar, many of whose subjects, disgusted with his innovations, Charles believed would welcome him rather as a friend than oppose him as a foe. In this, however, he deceived himself; for the Russian people were rapidly becoming sensible of the wisdom of their ruler, and patient with respect to his changes, many of which they perceived to be beneficial.

The news of Charles's intention to advance on Russia, drew Peter from Moscow, where he had retired to pass the winter. The Swede had fixed his winter quarters in Lithuania; and the czar hurried to Grodno, in that country; where, with a very small force, he established his head-quarters. Charles, on hearing of his arrival, dashed forward with only 800 men to besiege the town, which, on account of the rapidity of his movements, he took by surprise. A German officer, who had the command of a body of troops at one of the gates of the



town, on seeing the king of Sweden, immediately concluded that he was followed by his army. Struck with consternation, he fled from his post, and left the passage open to the enemy. The alarm spread throughout Grodno, and the few Russians who attempted to make a stand were cut to pieces by the Swedish guards. Peter, and the officers who surrounded him, shared the panic and retreated from the town; and Charles planted a guard of thirty men at the very gate by which the czar had retired. During the night, some Jesuits, whose house had been allotted for the accommodation of the king of Sweden, contrived to repair to the czar, and acquaint him with the actual state of affairs. Peter immediately returned with 1,500 horse, in the hope of capturing Charles. Having forced the Swedish guard, an engagement ensued in the streets and public square; but during it the Swedish army arrived, and the czar was a second time compelled to abandon the city.

The position of Peter was a dangerous one; but, fortunately for him, Charles could not make a rapid progress, in the depth of winter, through a swampy and famine-smitten country. The Russians retired by forced marches, followed by the Swedes, whose king had resolved to carry matters to extremity. The czar strengthened the principal posts where the enemy were to pass, and adopted every expedient in his power to stop their progress.

His chief movement was a masterly one. Seeing that Charles was resolved to pursue him, he did not retire towards Moscow, but withdrew into a part of the country where the invader could not procure supplies for his army, or make good his retreat in case of disaster. Proceeding to the country of the Ukraine, he established himself behind sheltered lines, on the right bank of the Dnieper. In June, 1708, before he had effected this movement, he was overtaken by Charles at the little river Berezina. The latter threw a bridge across the river, forced a passage under unfavourable circumstances, and formed in order of battle. The Russians now proved the value of that discipline to which Peter had subjected them. They sustained a fierce contest of some hours with the Swedes. Certainly the latter obtained the advantage, but it was not until they had attacked the Russian intrenchments seven times. Charles was in the greatest personal danger during this battle; and though he was regarded as the victor, it

was no discouragement to Peter. The sagacious czar saw the truth of the observation he had made after the terrible defeat of his troops at Narva—that the Swedes, in time, would teach the Russians to beat them. Under the guidance of the indefatigable czar, they were learning that important lesson rapidly.

The Russians continued their retreat to the banks of the Dnieper, and were still followed by the Swedes, who entertained no apprehension of danger, and seemed scarcely sensible of fatigue. Skirmishes occasionally occurred in the rear of the Russians, on which the Swedes hung like a cloud; but though the latter generally obtained the advantage, yet they were weakened even by this profitless sort of victory. Peter could better bear loss in this way than could Charles; because his army was numerically larger. It consisted altogether of nearly 100,000 men; comprising about 38,000 infantry, a similar force of cavalry, 20,000 Cossacks, and 6,000 Calmucks. The Swedish army did not exceed 80,000 men; but as they were veteran soldiers, highly disciplined and accustomed to victory, the chances were in their favour. Peter's consciousness of the superiority of the enemy, deterred him from deciding the struggle by an open battle, and he trusted to harass and starve Charles into retiring. The expectation was a highly rational one; for winter was approaching, the country was desolate, the roads bad, and the Swedes were short of provisions. Moreover, scarcely any opportunity remained for obtaining the latter; for Peter had laid waste the surrounding country in the direction of Moscow, as far as Smolensk.

At length Charles arrived at the banks of the Dnieper, in the neighbourhood of a small town called Mohilo. On the 22nd of September he attacked a large body of Russian and Calmuck cavalry. The latter, used to a desultory mode of warfare, fled through hollow and rugged ways, from which they often unexpectedly reappeared and renewed the conflict. By this means they cut off the regiment at the head of which Charles fought, from the rest of the Swedish army. The king's life was in the greatest danger; two aides-de-camp fell dead at his feet, and his horse was killed beneath him. He then fought on foot, surrounded by his officers; so many of whom were captured or slain, that he was left with no more than five attendants. Yet, though he



killed twelve of the enemy with his own hand, he himself escaped without a single wound. At length he was succoured from this dangerous position by a colonel named Dardof. The Calmucks were mostly put to the sword, and the Russian cavalry sought safety in flight.

Charles was still in the great road to the capital of Russia; but the country was so wasted and depopulated, that his army began to be in serious want of provisions. His minister, Count Piper, earnestly entreated the king to halt until General Lewenhaupt, who was expected with supplies and a reinforcement of 15,000 men, should arrive. Charles rejected this reasonable advice, and, quitting the road that led to the capital, turned his steps towards the barren and inhospitable wastes of the Ukraine. This wild movement disheartened his troops, and astonished the czar, who knew that neither shelter nor provisions could be obtained in that desolate region, and that the country was defended by 30,000 Cossacks, under their hetman Mazeppa. "This person," says Voltaire, "was a Polish gentleman, born in the palatinate of Podolia; he had been educated as page to John Casimir, and had received some tincture of polite learning in his court. An intrigue which he had had in his youth with the lady of a Polish gentleman, having been discovered, the husband caused him to be whipped with rods, to be bound stark naked upon a wild horse, and turned adrift in that condition. The horse, which had been brought out of the Ukraine, returned to his own country, and carried Mazeppa with him, half dead with hunger and fatigue. Some of the country-people gave him assistance, and he lived among them for a long time, signalling himself in several excursions against the Tartars. The superiority of his knowledge gained him great respect among the Cossacks; and his reputation greatly increasing, the czar found it necessary to make him prince of the Ukraine. Being one day at table with the czar at Moscow, the latter proposed to him the task of disciplining the Cossacks, and rendering them docile and dependent. Mazeppa replied, that the situation of the Ukraine, and the genius of those people, were insuperable objects to such a scheme. The czar, who began to be heated with wine, and had not at all times the command of his passions, called him a traitor, and threatened to have him impaled. Ma-

zeppa, on his return to the Ukraine, conceived the idea of a revolt, the execution of which was greatly facilitated by the Swedish army, which soon after appeared on the frontiers. He was determined to render himself independent, and to erect the Ukraine, with some other ruins of the Russian empire, into a powerful kingdom. Brave, enterprising, and indefatigable, he entered secretly into a league with the king of Sweden, to accelerate the ruin of the czar, and to convert it to his own advantage."

Charles reposed an imprudent confidence in the promises of Mazeppa, and proceeded to the river Desna, where the latter had arranged to meet him with 30,000 Cossacks, together with a considerable amount of treasure, ammunition, and provisions. The Swedish monarch also sent a command to General Lewenhaupt, to bring his troops and provisions into the Ukraine, where he proposed to pass the winter. Charles was a creature of impulse. He did not pause to reflect whether the Cossack chief was in a condition to fulfil his engagements, or how he should provision his army in case of any disappointment. In fact, the king had fallen into a fatal error, which the czar resolved to omit no opportunity of pushing forward to extremities.

Peter suffered the Swedes to march without molestation upon their fate; but it was nature rather than man against whom they had now to contend. A marshy forest of fifty leagues had to be traversed: here the Swedes mistook their way, which it cost them a four days' weary march to recover; and even then they lost most of their artillery and waggons, which either stuck or sank in the morass. When they arrived, in a state of exhaustion, on the banks of the Desna, they were almost without provisions. There Mazeppa was to have met the king, and brought the necessary succours for the troops. No news, however, was heard of him; and hunger began to blanch the cheeks and shrink the bold figures of the Swedes. Charles shared all the hardships and privations of his followers, and by his dauntless bearing, sustained their spirits; but though they admired his courage, they condemned his conduct.

Instead of falling upon the main body of the Swedes, the czar prudently resolved to prevent a junction between that and the troops under General Lewenhaupt. He was charged, not only with the conduct of



15,000 men, but with great stores of provisions, ammunition, and treasure. Peter suffered him to cross the Dnieper, though the rear of the Swede had been harassed by a Russian force under General Bauer. The czar also followed with a powerful army; and, in the month of October, the Swedes found themselves pressed upon by a powerful army, the numerical strength of which has been variously stated. Lewenhaupt, with the fearlessness of his country, resolved to attack the czar, and a furious conflict took place on the 7th of the month. So fierce was the first attack of the Swedes, that they killed 1,500 of their foes, threw the Russians into confusion, and put numbers of them to flight. The astonished czar feared defeat, which, under the circumstances, would have been utter ruin. Rushing to the rear-guard, where the Cossacks and Calmucks—the most ferocious of his soldiery—were stationed, he shouted, “I command you to fire upon every one that runs away, even upon me myself, should I be so cowardly as to fly.” The Russians recovered themselves, but the battle was not at first resumed; for the Swedish general, who had received strict orders to rejoin his master, chose rather to continue his march than to resume the strife.

The following morning the czar attacked the Swedes upon the borders of a morass. The conflict raged for some time with great fury; but though the loss of the Russians was three times greater than that of the Swedes, the victory remained undecided. At four in the afternoon the struggle was renewed for the third time, when the superior numbers of the Russians gave them the advantage; and the Swede's lines were broken, and the men driven back upon their baggage. Though conquered, they would not submit; Lewenhaupt rallied them behind the waggons, and the men exhibited a readiness again to meet the foe. At daybreak, the czar attacked the Swedes again; and a fifth battle was fought, as sanguinary as any of the preceding ones: of the 9,000 Swedes that were left, one-half perished, and the remainder were still unbroken. These pursued their march during the night, after having spiked their cannon, and burnt a portion of their baggage-waggons; the rest, containing the provisions for Charles's army, fell into the hands of the czar. The latter lost about 10,000 men in these desperate engagements; but he succeeded in crippling the king of Sweden.

Lewenhaupt, though defeated, obtained the credit of disputing a victory for three days against an immensely superior force; and of having effected an honourable retreat. In this condition he reached his master, with a miserable remnant of his troops, scarcely amounting to 4,000 men, and destitute alike of the expected provisions and ammunition.

Much about the same time Mazeppa arrived; and he, too, came rather like a fugitive than a powerful ally; bringing with him only 7,000 followers. The Cossacks thought he was leading them against Charles; and when he disclosed his design of joining that monarch, the bulk of them deserted him, and returned home. Those who remained with him were fallen upon by the Russians, and great numbers cut to pieces. Thirty of the principal friends of the hetman had been captured and broken on the wheel; his towns had been burnt, his treasures plundered, and the provisions he had collected for the king of Sweden seized. He himself escaped with difficulty with the remnant of the Cossack force; and the enraged czar had conferred his dignity of hetman on another.

Charles did not give way under these accumulated misfortunes, or permit them to alter his designs. Neither Mazeppa nor Count Piper could induce him to relinquish his intended progress towards the little fortified town of Pultowa, the capital of the Ukraine. To the suggestion of the latter, that he should pass the winter in a small town of the Ukraine, called Romana, the king answered that it was beneath his dignity to shut himself up in a town. To a further entreaty that he would march back into Poland to obtain for his troops that refreshment of which they stood so greatly in need, he responded, that this would be the same thing as flying before the czar; that the season would grow milder, and that he must subdue the Ukraine, and march on to Moscow. In the meantime, the Swedish army was reduced to about 25,000 men, and these were gradually melting away. The winter was remarkably severe, and great numbers of the Swedes perished from cold and want. In one of these terrible marches, about 2,000 men fell, almost frozen to death, before the eyes of their sovereign. These brave soldiers were without shoes, and their uniforms were reduced to rags. Almost their only food was bread, and this of the coarsest kind. Yet Charles assumed



an air of indifference. A soldier ventured, in the presence of the whole army, to present to him, with an air of complaint, a piece of bread that was black and mouldy, made of barley and oats. The king received it without the least emotion, ate every morsel of it, and then coolly said to the soldier, "It is not good, but it may be eaten." Such conduct contributed to make the Swedes support hardships which would have been intolerable under any other general.

The czar had advanced into the Ukraine to harass an enemy whom he wisely concluded must, in the end, be ruined, as his army could not receive reinforcements. Yet such was the intense cold of the winter of 1708-'9, that the rival forces were compelled to remain in a state of inaction. But the positions of the two armies were widely different. The Russians had a fertile country to fall back upon for subsistence; while the Swedes were almost perishing from want. Indeed, had it not been for the influence of Mazeppa in procuring provisions, they must have been exterminated from the combined action of cold and famine. Notwithstanding the usual discipline of the Swedes, their necessities drove them to ravage the surrounding country; they thus became a terror to the scanty population, and constantly narrowed the field from which they could obtain supplies.

Charles resumed his march in the month of February, 1709; and proceeding across the Ukraine in a south-easterly direction, entered the sandy deserts lying westward of the territory of the Don Cossacks. Finding progress almost impossible, he was compelled to retrace his steps over the country just desolated by the progress of his starving troops, who burnt all the villages on the road, because the poor peasants hid their flocks in caves and retired places, and struggled hard with the invaders, who wanted to deprive them of their means of subsistence. Destitute alike of guide or shelter, the obstinate Charles lost three months in marching and counter-marching through cold and barren solitudes; during which time his army was slowly mouldering away.

The fortified town of Pultowa was well supplied with provisions, and would, if taken by Charles, have enabled him to rest and feed his wretched troops until he could obtain reinforcements from Poland and Sweden. His only resource lay in the capture of Pultowa; while, on the other hand,

it was of immense consequence to the Russians, as it commanded a mountain-pass communicating with the main road to Moscow. This defile the czar had had the precaution to render almost impenetrable; yet to the sanguine Charles nothing seemed impossible; and with his usual enthusiasm and contempt of danger, he depended on marching to Moscow after he had made himself master of Pultowa.

The Swedes—now reduced to about 18,000 men, exclusive of their Cossack allies—felt reanimated as they threw up trenches before the batteries of Pultowa; for they felt sure of taking it, and thus terminating the miseries they had so long endured. The czar was soon aware of this movement; and he arrived in the neighbourhood of the threatened town on the 15th of June, with an army of about 60,000 men, well provided with artillery, ammunition, and provisions. He first reinforced the garrison—an act which he accomplished by a manœuvre which showed that he had made some advance in the practice of military tactics. Having by a feint attack drawn the besiegers out of their trenches, he took advantage of the circumstance, and poured fresh troops into the town. "Ah!" exclaimed Charles, as he beheld the success of this expedient, "I see well that we have taught the Muscovites the art of war!"

The river Vorskla flowed between the rival armies. This Peter crossed with his whole force, and intrenched himself, in a single night, within view of the enemy. The czar then posted his cavalry between two woods, and covered them with several redoubts, lined with artillery. Several skirmishes took place while these measures were in progress. In one of them Charles received a shot from a carbine, which shattered the bone of his heel. Though the pain was extreme, he did not mention that he was wounded until an attendant perceived that his boot was covered with blood. So severe was the injury, that the surgeons were of opinion that the leg must be amputated. One, however, affirmed that he could save the limb by making deep incisions. "Fall to work, then, presently," replied the king; "cut boldly, and fear nothing." Then holding the leg himself, he beheld the operation with as much calmness as if it had been made upon another person.

While confined to his bed, Charles was informed that the Russians intended to attack him; and though himself unable to



lead his army into the field, he resolved upon anticipating the enemy. Voltaire draws a comparison between the rival kings, who at this time excited the attention of all Europe. He observes—"On the 8th of July, 1709, the decisive battle of Pultowa was fought between the two most extraordinary monarchs that were in the world. Charles XII., illustrious in consequence of a succession of victories during nine years; and the czar Peter, distinguished by nine years of labour, taken to form troops equal to those of Sweden. The one glorious for having given away dominions; the other for having civilised his own. Charles, fond of dangers and fighting for glory alone; Peter, not avoiding danger, and making war only for advantage. The Swedish monarch, liberal from greatness of soul; the Muscovite, never giving but with some great design. The one, master of a sobriety and continence beyond example; of a magnanimous disposition, and never cruel but once: the other, not having yet divested himself of the barbarism of his education and of his country; as much the object of terror to his subjects as of admiration to strangers; and too prone to excesses, which even shortened his days. Charles bore the title of 'Invincible,' of which a single moment might deprive him; while the neighbouring nations had given Peter the name of 'Great,' which, as he did not owe it to his victories, he could not lose by a defeat."

The battle commenced at half-past four in the morning, with a desperate attack on the Russian redoubts. Charles was carried in a litter at the head of his infantry; and his troops, cheered by his presence, took two of the redoubts sword-in-hand. Indeed, so furious was the first charge of the Swedes, that the Russian squadrons were broken, and in danger of being defeated. Peter dashed forward to rally his men, and a musket-ball passed through his hat: an inch difference in the flight of that bullet would have altered the destinies of Russia. Mentschikoff also fought as though he felt that life, fortune, fame, country—all hung upon his sword; and such was the danger to which he was exposed, that three horses fell dead beneath him. The inspired Swedes shouted "Victory!" and Charles, who was still intoxicated with the remembrance of Narva, concluded that the battle was won.

He was deceived. General Crents, whom he had sent with 5,000 horse to take the

enemy in flank, missed his way, and failed to execute the duty assigned to him. This gave the czar time to rally his cavalry, which now fell upon the Swedes, and threw them into disorder. At the same time the Russians kept up a fire from seventy-two pieces of cannon upon the Swedish cavalry: the latter were almost destitute of artillery; it had been abandoned during their long and painful marches. Mentschikoff had been detached by the czar to take up a position between Pultowa and the Swedes; and this command he executed with such dexterity, as to surround a Swedish corps of reserve, amounting to 3,000 men, and cut them to pieces. The Russian infantry now advanced from their lines in order of battle; the Swedes also prepared for a general engagement; and a pause ensued.

Peter rode from rank to rank, encouraging the soldiers and captains, and promising rewards to them all. At nine o'clock the conflict recommenced, and the horses of Charles's litter were almost immediately killed by a cannon-ball. A second shot broke the litter in pieces, and overturned the king. So dangerous was the position he occupied, that of the four-and-twenty soldiers who afterwards relieved each other by carrying him upon their pikes, no less than one-and-twenty were killed. At the same time the cannon of the Russians made terrible execution upon the Swedes, who were struck with consternation at the slaughter to which they were exposed. At length their first line was driven back upon their second, which, struck with panic, broke and fled. The battle was prolonged for two hours with great fury, when the Swedes were altogether thrown into confusion, and slaughtered in heaps. According to the Russian calculation, 9,224 Swedes were left dead upon the field, and two or three thousand were taken prisoners. The loss of the victors was comparatively small.

Charles was not only defeated, but ruined. Though perfectly helpless, he refused to fly. In this position, Poniatowski, a Polish officer who had followed the king from affection, caused two soldiers to lift him on a horse. Then rallying a body of 500 cavalry around the king, Poniatowski dashed through the Russian regiments, and conducted Charles to the baggage of the Swedish army. During his flight, he suffered extreme agony from the wound in his heel, which led to suppuration, attended with fever; but, though sometimes insen-







THE BATTLE OF BLOIS, 1870





sible, he never complained. On inquiring for Count Piper, his minister, and for his most distinguished generals, he was informed they had been made prisoners. "Prisoners to the Russians!" he responded, with a shrug of the shoulders; "come, then, let us rather go to the Turks." This he and his followers did; for after almost unexampled sufferings, they reached the Turkish town of Bender, in Bessarabia, where he was received with hospitality by the seraskier.

The remains of the Swedish army, under General Lewenhaupt, were pursued by Prince Mentschikoff, at the head of 20,000 men. In consideration for the miserable condition of his men, the Swede surrendered, and the whole army was made prisoners of war. Many of these brave men, however, sooner than become captives to the Russians, threw themselves into the Dnieper, and were drowned. The rest were sent to colonise Siberia, where they supported themselves by a mechanical ingenuity for which they eventually became distinguished. As to the Cossacks who were captured, the czar regarded them all as traitors; and, with that vindictive ferocity which commonly characterised him, had them broken on the wheel.

On the evening of Peter's victory at Pultowa, he honoured the captive Swedish generals with an invitation to dine with him. He was much disappointed that he could not extend a similarly unwelcome hospitality to their king. As the prisoners were brought to him in crowds, after the battle, he frequently inquired, "Where, then, is my brother Charles?" At table, the czar asked General Renschild, "What might be the number of his master's troops before the battle?" The Swede answered, "That the king alone had the muster-roll, and would never communicate it to any one; but that he imagined the whole might be about 30,000, of which 18,000 were Swedes, and the rest Cossacks." In a tone of surprise, the czar then inquired, "How they durst venture to penetrate into so distant a country, and lay siege to Pultowa with such a handful of men?" "We were not always consulted," replied the Swedish general; "but, like faithful servants, we obeyed our master's orders without ever presuming to contradict them." "Ah!" exclaimed Peter, turning to some of his courtiers who were formerly suspected of having been engaged in a conspiracy against him—"see how a king ought to be served."

Then, filling his glass, he said as he raised it to his lips, "To the health of my masters in the art of war." General Renschild asked who were the persons honoured with so high a title. "You, gentlemen," replied the czar; "the Swedish generals." The general responded, "Your majesty is very ungrateful, then, for having handled your masters so rudely."

The war between Sweden and Russia may be said to have terminated, in fact, with the battle of Pultowa, the results of which were of the highest importance to Russia, and of no small consequence to Europe. The victory of Peter was the triumph of patience and forethought over mere reckless daring; the exaltation of the reforming statesman over the warrior who preferred personal fame to the advancement of his subjects. Peter was the original aggressor; but he had since been disposed to make restitution, and to conclude peace with his foe. On the other hand, Charles indulged in the dream of dethroning the czar, and conquering the Russian empire. In this position the original aspect of the quarrel was reversed; Charles became the aggressor, while Peter was the defender of his own territories against one whose career was desolation, and whose success brought no good either to victors or vanquished. From this famous battle the Russian empire has derived its present prosperity and cultivation; which, had Charles been successful, would have been thrown back to an indefinite period. If Peter had been defeated, or had he fallen amidst the victory of his soldiers, Russia would again have become the prey of civil wars and domestic convulsions, from which she would not have escaped until some other giant in the art of ruling came to liberate her.

Other and more immediate results arose out of the defeat of Charles at Pultowa. When the Swede was flushed with the glory of conquest, he compelled the emperor Joseph to eject the catholics out of 105 churches, in favour of the Silesians of the confession of Augsburg: the latter were now ejected in their turn, and the churches restored to the catholics. Augustus, the dethroned king of Poland, protested against an extorted abdication, and was, before the close of the year, restored by Peter. The senate of Sweden supposed their king to be dead; but, on account of the uncertainty on this point, both they and the nation were thrown into confusion. A new treaty



against Sweden was entered into between the czar and the kings of Poland, Denmark, and Prussia. Its design was to restore to each of those states the conquests obtained from them by Gustavus Adolphus. The czar thus acquired a title to Livonia, Ingria, and a part of Finland; and he was not slow in attempting to gain possession of these territories. In the month of November he bombarded and afterwards blockaded Riga, the capital of Livonia, which submitted to the Russians after between nine and ten thousand of them had perished by a plague that was raging there. Kexholm, Pernau, Revel, and other towns also surrendered; and the whole of Livonia was in the hands of the czar.

The czar in the meantime had visited St. Petersburg, to inspect the progress of that city, from whence he proceeded to Moscow, and superintended the preparations which were making for a grand military festival in celebration of the triumph over the Swedes. The first day of the new year (1710) was ushered in with this solemnity, by which the czar sought to inspire his subjects with military enthusiasm and ideas of conquest. The artillery of the vanquished, their colours and standards, the litter in which their wounded king was carried on the field of battle, the soldiers, officers, generals, and ministers of the captive Swedes, all on foot, moved in solemn procession under seven magnificent arches, attended with the ringing of bells, the braying of trumpets, the booming roar of a hundred pieces of cannon, and the wild joyous shouts of a living sea of people. The victors, preceded by their generals, mounted upon war-chargers, closed the procession. The czar, as was usual with him, took his position according to the rank he held in the army, which was then that of major-general. At each triumphal arch stood the deputies of the several orders of the state; and at the last, a number of young noblemen, attired in the garb of Roman patricians, presented the victorious monarch with a crown of laurel. At every pause made in this gorgeous progress, the people rent the air with acclamations of "Long live the emperor our father!" It has been truly said, that this imposing splendour augmented the veneration the Russians entertained for their monarch, and perhaps made him appear greater in their eyes than the real advantages they derived from him.

The following month another ceremony took place, which was doubtless more agreeable to the czar than any festival imitated from the military pageants of the ancient Romans, for it showed the respect in which he began to be held by the old and powerful states of Europe. In the year 1708, Mateof, his ambassador at the court of London, was arrested in the streets for debt, at the suit of some English merchants, and obliged to give in bail. The merchants contended that the privileges of ambassadors must yield to the laws of commerce; while Mateof and the foreign ministers who advocated his cause, maintained that, under any circumstances, their persons ought to be regarded as sacred. Peter was greatly offended at what he considered as a slight offered to himself in the person of his representative, and he wrote to the queen of England, and insisted upon satisfaction. Anne was perplexed. She could not comply with his desire to have the merchants punished, because, by the laws of their country, they had a right to sue for their just demands; while, at the same time, no law existed to exempt foreign ministers from being arrested for debt. The irritation of the czar was increased by a suspicion, that the ambassadors of Russia were not respected in other countries; for only the preceding year, the unfortunate General Patkul, his plenipotentiary in Saxony, had been tortured to death at the command of Charles XII. Anne induced her parliament to pass an act rendering it no longer lawful to arrest an ambassador for debt; and with this Peter was obliged to be contented. But the great victory of Pultowa rendered the czar a more illustrious and powerful prince in the estimation of his neighbours; and in England it was thought necessary to make a further public satisfaction to the hero of that famous contest. Mr. Whitworth was selected to proceed to Russia and offer a ceremonial apology. This gentleman was commissioned to address the czar as "Most high and most mighty emperor," and to inform him that the queen had imprisoned the persons who presumed to arrest his ambassador, and that they had been rendered infamous. The statement was an untruth; but the czar accepted the compliment, which was an indication of the rising importance of Russia. Peter had not been called emperor by any foreign state until he won the battle of Pultowa.



## CHAPTER XXII.

WAR WITH TURKEY; PETER AND HIS ARMY ADVANCE INTO MOLDAVIA; ENGAGEMENTS ON THE BANKS OF THE PRUTH, AND DESPERATE SITUATION OF PETER; HE OBTAINS A PEACE, AND IS ALLOWED TO RETIRE; MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE ALEXIS, AND PUBLIC CELEBRATION OF THE CZAR'S MARRIAGE WITH CATHERINE; PETER ENTERS INTO A FRESH LEAGUE AGAINST SWEDEN; ACTIVE HOSTILITIES WITH THAT COUNTRY; PETER DEFEATS THE SWEDISH NAVY, AND BECOMES MASTER OF FINLAND; NATIONAL REJOICINGS OF THE RUSSIANS.

CHARLES XII., in his retreat at Bender, strained every nerve to induce the sultan, Achmet III., to take up arms against Russia. His endeavours were seconded by the mother of the sultan, who, though she had never seen Charles, was influenced by a great admiration for this extraordinary man. "When will you," she would sometimes say to her son, "assist my lion to devour this czar?"

Though Charles and his followers, amounting altogether to 1,800 persons, were all hospitably entertained at Bender, at the sole expense of the sultan, yet it is not very probable that monarch would have been induced to take any active part against the czar, but that his own interests were involved. The Ottoman Porte seemed instinctively to recognise a growing enemy in the rising empire of Russia, and to regard it with jealousy, if not with aversion. The sultan viewed with suspicion the fortifications which the czar had erected at Azoff and Taganrog, and the increasing naval power of Russia on the waters of Azoff and the Euxine. He discerned a spirit of restless encroachment in Peter, which he considered it necessary to check; and he was confirmed in this resolution by the representations of the khan of the Crimea, whose independence was overshadowed by the increasing might of Russia.

When, therefore, Charles presented memorial after memorial to the sultan, and his favourite, Count Poniatowski, backed them with all the insinuating arts of an accomplished statesman, the Ottoman Porte resolved on war. The sultan presented the count with a purse containing 1,000

ducats; and the grand-vizier said to him, "I will take your king in one hand, and a sword in the other, and will lead him to Moscow at the head of 200,000 men." Though the distribution of Russian gold among the ministers of the sultan deferred the coming storm, it was unable to avert it. The chief vizier was changed, and hostile feelings towards Russia influenced the councils of the Porte. As a preliminary to a declaration of war, Count Tolstoi, the czar's ambassador, was arrested in the public streets at Constantinople, and committed, together with thirty of his followers, to the gloomy state prison called the Seven Towers.\* This was in accordance with a barbarous custom then prevailing at Constantinople, arising from the contempt in which the Turks held foreign ministers.

Peter was much irritated at this indignity, and he resolved to avenge it. In the January of 1711 he appointed a kind of senatorial regency to govern during his absence; issued a conscription for the purpose of recruiting his army, one division of which he sent to Moldavia; besides putting his ships at Azoff and the Black Sea in readiness. But before the czar left Moscow, he made a public acknowledgment of his marriage with the Livonian orphan, which had been privately solemnised in 1707. "The young captive of Marienburg," observes Voltaire, "was superior to her sex, as well as to her misfortunes. Her behaviour had rendered her so agreeable, that the czar would always have her near his person. She attended him in his travels and in his most toilsome expeditions, sharing his fatigues, and soothing his

\* "The Seven Towers—that celebrated prison of which the very name is a spell of power—are rapidly crumbling to decay, but must continue to be amongst the most interesting of the antiquities of Constantinople, as long as one stone remains upon another."

"Instruments of torture—racks, wheels and oubliettes—are rife within this place of gloom and horror. One chasm, upon whose brink you stand, is called the 'Well of Blood;' and is said to have overflowed its margin with the ensanguined stream

which was once warm with life. A small court, designated the 'Place of Heads,' is pointed out as having been cumbered with the slain, until the revolting pile was of sufficient height to enable the spectator to look out from its summit upon the waves of the glittering Propontis; and more than one stone tunnel is shown, in which the captive was condemned to crawl upon his hands and knees, and there left to die of famine."—Miss Pardoe's *City of the Sultan*.



cares, with the cheerfulness of her disposition and complaisant behaviour. She was quite a stranger to all that fastidious pomp and ceremony which the rest of the sex have now converted into a real necessity. But what rendered her a more extraordinary favourite, was her neither being envied nor opposed; nor was any other person sacrificed to make room for her promotion. Often did she appease the emperor's wrath, and add to his greatness by inspiring him with clemency." The tie between Catherine and the czar was doubtless strengthened by the fact, that she had already borne him two daughters.

Peter left Moscow for his expedition to Turkey on the 17th of March, attended by the devoted Catherine, who could not be prevented from accompanying him on a campaign which it was justly anticipated would be an arduous one. The czar proceeded to Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, with an army of only 40,000 men. The princes or hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, though acknowledging the supremacy of the Porte, were intriguing with the czar, through whose instrumentality they hoped to accomplish their independence. Cantimir, the prince of Wallachia, had made liberal promises of troops and provisions to the czar, but he afterwards pleaded that he was unable to fulfil them on account of the attachment his subjects bore towards the Porte. As for the Prince of Wallachia, he shrunk from the coming storm, and dreading the vengeance of the Turks, abandoned his secret alliance with Russia, and returned to his duty. These defections placed the czar in a position of serious difficulty; for he found himself in a wild, uncultivated country, where the herbage that should have supplied forage to his horses, had been destroyed by swarms of locusts, and provisions for his troops could scarcely be obtained. The men pursued their way across a mere desert, oppressed by the scorching heat of the sun, and greatly in want of water. Desertion and hunger told heavily upon his army.

Such was the situation of the czar, when he received intelligence that the Turkish vizier, Baltagai Mahomet, had crossed the Danube at the head of 100,000 men, and was directing his march towards Jassy, along the banks of the Pruth. Peter held a council of war, and decided upon marching towards the Pruth, and attacking the enemy, despite his superiority of numbers.

This resolve was put into execution, and the czar arrived at the banks of the river by the 18th of June. He was too late to dispute the passage of the Turkish army, which, joined by the Tartars of the Crimea and other reinforcements, was swelled to the formidable strength of 200,000 men.

The disparity of numbers between the rival forces was alarming; the situation of the Russians extremely critical. Peter's position resembled that of Charles at Pultowa. He was almost destitute of provisions; while an army of Turks in front prevented his advance, and an army of Tartars behind cut off his retreat. Seeing his safety to consist solely in the accomplishment of the latter movement, Peter decamped during the night of the 20th of July. It was too late; for at daybreak the Turks fell upon his rear. The Russians were compelled to pause, and intrench themselves behind their baggage and heavy waggons. In this position they met the attack of the Turks with firmness, and even compelled them to retire. Peter had formed his army, which consisted of 30,000 infantry and about 7,000 cavalry, into a hollow square, in the centre of which he placed Catherine and the women; and in this position the Russians received several furious but irregular onslaughts from the Turks. Yet the situation of the czar was desperate; for his enemies had only to maintain their position, and the Russians must either surrender or perish from hunger. In the protracted sort of engagement, extending over three days, the loss of both Turks and Russians was terrible.

In this painful state of affairs, the czar's spirits began to give way. To the Russian senate, whom he had appointed to rule in his absence, he addressed this declaration:—"I announce to you, that deceived by false intelligence, and through no fault of mine, I am here shut up in my camp by a Turkish army four times more numerous than my own; our provisions cut off; and on the point of being cut to pieces or taken prisoners, unless Heaven comes to our aid in some unexpected manner. If it befall that I am taken by the Turks, you will no longer consider me your czar and lord, nor pay regard to any order that may be brought you on my part; not even though you may see my hand signed to it; but you will wait until I come myself in person. If I am destined to perish here, and you receive well-confirmed news of my death,



then you will choose for my successor the worthiest among you."

To hide the torture of his mind, Peter retired to his tent on the advance of night, and gave orders that no one should approach him. He subsequently admitted that, in his whole life, he never experienced such agitation as racked him in that hour of danger and apparent ruin. He revolved in his thoughts all that he had been doing for so many years to promote the glory and happiness of his country, and that he must now either see his army exterminated by famine, or encounter another of such superior force that defeat would be almost inevitable. Yet, even in this distraction, he decided for battle; and sending for General Scheremetof, commanded him to have everything ready, at break of day, for attacking the Turks with fixed bayonets. He also ordered the baggage to be burnt, to prevent its falling into the hands of the enemy. The czar repeated his prohibition that he should be undisturbed, and again he was left alone. But there was one who, in this night of consternation, dared to disobey his commands. Catherine felt that, in the time of trial, the place of the wife was by the side of her husband. In spite of his prohibition, she entered the tent of the czar, and found him in strong convulsions.

Peter was subject to these fits; and Catherine, more than any other person, had the power to soothe and restore him. Having applied the necessary remedies, she assumed a cheering tone, and suggested that, instead of fighting under such desperate circumstances, he should try what could be effected by negotiation. This proposition was the result of a council she had just before held with General Scheremetof and the other officers. It was impossible to anticipate any terms that were not of a most unfavourable kind, even if they did not involve dishonour. Peter was perplexed; the prospect was dark every way; but the entreaties and tears of Catherine prevailed, and he consented.

It has been said that Catherine bribed Baltagai Mahomet, the Turkish minister and general, and thus procured favourable terms for the czar. The assertion appears to be an idle calumny. It originated in the circumstance that the czarina, in compliance with Oriental custom (which enjoins that a suitor should never approach a minister empty-handed), sent to Baltagai all her jewels, money, and whatever valuables she

had with her in the camp. This was merely a customary tribute, and never designed nor accepted as a bribe. It is indeed absurd, to suppose that a man who had the control of the vast wealth of the Ottoman treasury, would have sold a favourable peace to a prostrate foe for a few jewels, which, had he reduced the czar, he could still have obtained as spoil. Other causes were at work. Baltagai had been disgusted with the ingratitude and insolence of the Swedish exile, Charles, whom he did not, therefore, wish to see too triumphant. Moreover, he was no soldier, and did not care to risk a battle, although victory appeared certain: and as to the alarming power of the czar, he doubtless thought that would be sufficiently checked by the humiliation Peter must experience in soliciting peace under circumstances which showed that his influence had been overrated. Much has been written upon this point; and it is certainly difficult to understand how Peter obtained such favourable terms as he did; yet we think Baltagai may fairly be acquitted of the charge of having sold the interests of his country.

After some delay, a suspension of arms was declared, and a favourable answer received from Baltagai. He required that the Russians should deliver up Azoff, and burn the galleys which lay in that harbour; demolish the important citadels built upon the Palus Mæotis, and surrender the ammunition and cannon contained in them to the sultan. The czar was also to renounce all further interference in the affairs of Poland and the Cossacks; and to promise that Charles XII. should not be molested on his return to Sweden. In addition to these terms, it was proposed that the ancient tribute of Russia to the Tartars of the Crimea should be renewed; but this offensive condition was abandoned. The Turks also insisted that Cantimir, the prince of Wallachia, who had promised assistance to Peter, should be delivered up to them. This the czar steadily refused, saying, "I will rather cede to the Turks the country as far as Kursk; I should still have some hopes of recovering it: but my word once broken cannot be restored. Honour is all that we have peculiar to ourselves; renouncing that, is ceasing to be a monarch."

To the other conditions Peter assented, and a treaty of peace was begun, concluded and signed all in one day, the 21st of July. The Turks furnished their starving foes



with provisions, and the czar was allowed to retire with his army, artillery, colours, and baggage. As the czar commenced his march, the king of Sweden spurred, hot and impatient, into the Turkish camp. He had come to see the ruin of his rival; and on hearing of the escape of Peter, he ran to the tent of the vizier, and angrily reproached him for having signed the treaty. "I have a right," replied Baltagai, "to make war or peace." "But," inquired the king, "had you not the whole Russian army in your power?" "Our law orders," returned the Turk, "to give peace to our enemies when they implore our mercy." "And does it command you," exclaimed the king, passionately, "to make a bad treaty when you may impose what conditions you please? Did it not depend upon you to lead the czar prisoner to Constantinople?" With a meaning sarcasm the vizier replied, "And who would have governed his empire in his absence? It is not proper that all kings should leave their dominions." Stung to the quick, Charles threw himself upon a sofa, and entangling his spur in the robe of the vizier, purposely tore it. Then, rising up, he disdainfully quitted the tent; and, remounting his horse, returned in rage and despair to Bender. It has been well observed, that the Turkish general, in overlooking the indignity he received, showed himself greater than the impetuous king who offered it. Charles afterwards employed himself in endeavouring, by intrigues at the Ottoman court, to have the vizier displaced; but his activity only led to the withdrawal of the sum allowed by the sultan for the maintenance of himself and his followers, and his being ordered to quit the empire.

Peter returned to Russia by way of Jassy; and, in compliance with the treaty he had so recently made, caused the fortresses of Samara and Kamienska to be demolished. He, however, raised some difficulties about the destruction of his harbour and works at Taganrog, and the restitution of Azoff. The sultan became impatient to receive the keys of the latter city, and negotiations were opened afresh. Azoff was then restored to the Turks—a circumstance by which the progress of Russia in the south, towards the sea, was driven back. At the same time the Ottoman Porte, notwithstanding its habitual contempt for Christian states, constituted itself the arbiter between Russia, Poland, and Sweden. The sultan desired the czar to withdraw his troops

from Poland, to which Peter consented, on condition that Charles should be compelled to retire from Turkey. The sultan was by no means averse to this arrangement, for he was tired of the whims and intrigues of his ungrateful guest, whom, nevertheless, he found it extremely difficult to get rid of. The czar's health had been seriously impaired by the mental anxiety he had experienced, and he therefore went to Carlsbad, in Bohemia, to drink the medicinal waters for which it is famous. Peter had for some time occasionally felt some mental uneasiness from another cause. His first wife, Eudoxia Lapuchin (whom, on account of her uncongenial temper and her bigoted opposition, he had thought necessary to divorce), brought him a son, who was born in the convent to which she had been compelled to retire. This prince, though he has been described as accomplished (an assertion which is extremely apocryphal), showed a headstrong disposition from his boyhood, and an attachment to low pleasures. His time was spent with vulgar and vicious companions; and, what was far worse, he inherited all his mother's bigotry and her aversion to those reforms which it was the great object of Peter's life to effect. Few things could have more deeply wounded the czar than the reflection that his successor might overturn his labours, and let the empire relapse into barbarism. It is probable that, even at this period, Peter had formed the idea of excluding his son from the throne, in the event of its being found impossible to reform him. The czar felt himself the parent of an empire, as well as the father of a dull and graceless youth.

With a view of reforming his son Alexis Petrovitz, the czar married him, in the October of 1711, at Dresden, to the princess of Wolfenbuttle, sister to the empress of Germany. The match had a political value to the czar, who was glad to strengthen his connections by so distinguished an alliance; but Alexis entered into it with reluctance. After the ceremony the czar returned to St. Petersburg, where he publicly celebrated his marriage with the czarina Catherine, to whom he had been previously united privately. The solemnity was conducted with great splendour; and Peter not only designed the festivities, but personally laboured at the preparation of them. This ceremonial was intended by him, and regarded by his subjects, as an act of grateful acknowledgment for the services Catherine had



lately rendered when the czar was hemmed in by his foes on the banks of the Pruth. The amiable nature of the czarina, and her utter devotion to her distinguished husband, neutralised any feeling of envy or ill-will which might otherwise have been entertained towards her on account of her humble origin. But either in times of grief or cheerfulness, the activity of the czar never forsook him. He followed up the public rejoicings with which the double marriage of his son and himself were celebrated, by planning and executing many national improvements. New roads were laid down, and new canals were dug. His city of St. Petersburg, now rapidly increasing in importance, was the favourite child of his brain. He finished the foundry and the admiralty, and caused an exchange and warehouses to be built there. Further than this, he removed the senate from Moscow to St. Petersburg; and thus made the latter, in some degree, the capital of the empire.

At peace with Turkey, Peter determined to strip Sweden of every place which could be an annoyance to his new capital. He even designed to take from Sweden all its German provinces; and in order to effect this, he entered into a league with the electors of Brandenburg and Hanover, and the king of Denmark. Charles, in his exile, showed the same inflexible pride which had ever characterised him. From his lonely dwelling in the deserts of Bessarabia, he hurled defiance at the czar and his allies; and without attempting to break up the league formed against him, sent commands, that the most vigorous resistance should be made both by land and sea. Notwithstanding the impoverished state of Sweden, both with respect to men and money, his orders were obeyed. The senate of Stockholm fitted out a fleet of thirteen ships of the line; and a considerable land force was raised, and placed under the command of Count Steinbock, a general whose unquestionable courage and military skill were exceeded by his cruelty. Steinbock attacked the Danish and Saxon troops near a place called Gadebusch, before the Russians were able to join them. The battle was fought with great fury; for such was the hatred existing between the Swedes and the Danes, that in many cases the officers rushed furiously upon each other, animated by a mad thirst for their adversaries' blood, and fell dead from the wounds received from this recklessness. Steinbock gained the vic-

tory; but that circumstance merely deferred his ruin. The Swedish general followed up his transient triumph by an act of infamous cruelty. Because the Danes had reduced the town of Stade to ashes, he retaliated on that of Altona, a commercial town below Hamburg, on the banks of the Elbe. The unfortunate inhabitants were compelled to quit their houses at midnight on the 9th of January, 1713, and to wander forth into the open country during a winter of more than usual severity. "Men and women," observes a modern historian, "weeping and wailing, and bending under the weight of their furniture, fled to the neighbouring hills, which were covered with snow. Many palsied men were carried thither on the shoulders of the young. Women with newly-born infants in their arms, fled and perished with them from the cold, throwing their last looks towards the flames which were consuming their homes. All the inhabitants had not time to quit the town before the Swedes set fire to it. The conflagration continued from midnight till ten in the morning; almost all the houses being wood, were entirely consumed; and the next day, scarcely anything remained to indicate that there had been a town upon that spot!" All Germany protested against this wanton cruelty; and the generals of the Polish and Danish armies wrote to Count Steinbock, reproaching him with his enormous cruelty, for the perpetration of which no military necessity could be alleged. The Swede retorted, that the allies were guilty of as great atrocities in desolating Pomerania, and that he had only endeavoured to teach the enemies of his master not to make war for the future like barbarians. The reproof was, no doubt, merited; but the retaliation was an ignoble one.

Steinbock's success was extremely transient. The Saxons and the Danes were soon joined by the Russians; and he was compelled to retire before the troops he had recently defeated, and shelter himself and his army in Tenningen, a fortified place in Holstein, into which he obtained admission by artifice. The allied army then went into winter quarters; but on the renewal of hostilities, the Swedes, amounting to 11,000 men, were compelled to surrender themselves prisoners of war. As to Steinbock, unable to repay the ransom which was demanded for his liberation, he languished out the remainder of his life in prison at Copen-



hagen. Thus, at least on this occasion, historical truth, and what is called poetical justice, went hand-in-hand.

Everything seemed adverse to the absent king of Sweden, whose turbulent behaviour in the Turkish dominions had made him the inmate of a prison. Nearly the whole of Pomerania was overrun and partitioned amongst the allies. With the exception of Stralsund, scarcely a place remained in the possession of the Swedes; and that was besieged by the Russians. The czar, satisfied that it must fall, left the operations against it in the hands of Prince Mentschikoff. He then (May, 1713) returned to St. Petersburg, and proceeded with a powerful squadron of galleys, and 16,000 troops, to pursue his career of conquest in the Gulf of Finland. Helsingfors, Bergo, and Abo, the latter the capital of Finland, successively yielded to the czar, who commanded the whole coast of the gulf up to the city he thus easily subdued. There was nothing of fighting for the love of glory about this: military vanity seems never to have been the moving principle in the mind of the czar. A glance at the map will show any one, that if St. Petersburg was to be maintained as the capital of Russia, the possession of the coasts of the Gulf of Finland was a geographical necessity. On becoming master of Abo, the czar robbed it of its magnificent library, which he conveyed to St. Petersburg, and erected a building for its reception.

The insulted and fallen Swedes, who were learning by painful experience, that no nation can long pursue a course of conquest without eventually suffering bitterly from that retaliation which seems a law of nature, resolved, in spite of their impoverished condition, to resist this last act of aggression. Collecting all their naval power, they put to sea in the Gulf of Bothnia, with a considerable squadron. The czar, glad of an opportunity of distinguishing his infant navy, set sail with sixteen ships of the line, and 180 galleys fit for navigating the shallow waters of the inlets of the gulf. The hostile fleets met near the Aland Isles: that of the Swedes was stronger in large ships, but inferior in galleys. Under such circumstances, the wisdom of the czar was apparent in bringing the enemy to an engagement among the rocks and shallows which lie in the neighbourhood of Aland, where, though galleys could act, large vessels could not. The

Swedes were defeated with terrible slaughter, their admiral captured, and many of their vessels sunk or taken. The rest escaped; but so great was the consternation, that even the inhabitants of Stockholm did not think themselves safe. This triumph at Aland, Peter regarded as the most glorious action of his life after the victory at Pultowa. It made him master of Finland, the government of which he gave to Prince Galitzin, and then returned to St. Petersburg, where he was received with public rejoicings and festivities. These were rendered more brilliant to celebrate the birth of a daughter, of which the czarina had been confined. In honour of her, Peter instituted the order of St. Catherine, which dignity she alone could bestow.

The Russian people were delighted with the spectacles with which the czar occasionally entertained them; and not the less so because they were all highly flattering to their national emotions. On this occasion the cannon, colours, and standards taken from the captured Swedish ships, were carried to St. Petersburg, accompanied by the Russian army, marching in order of battle. The triumphal arch which the czar, according to custom, had himself designed, was decorated with the emblems of his victories. Admiral Apraxin, who commanded the Russian fleet, headed the procession beneath the arch, and was followed by the czar as rear-admiral, and the other officers, according to their rank. Erenschild (the Swedish admiral) and his officers followed their conquerors. Gold and silver medals were then distributed to all Russians engaged in the battle; and the czar, ascending a throne which had been prepared for the occasion, thus addressed his subjects and companions-in-arms:—"Countrymen! is there any one among you who, twenty years ago, could have thought of fighting under me in the Baltic, in ships built by yourselves, and that we should be settled in those countries which we have conquered by our great toils and courage? The ancient seat of sciences is said to have been in Greece; they afterwards moved to Italy, whence they spread themselves to most parts of Europe. Now it is our turn, if you will second my design, and to obedience add study. Arts circulate in the world as does blood in the body; and perhaps they will settle their empire amongst us in their return to Greece, their ancient country. I dare hope that, by our achieve-



ments and solid glory, we shall one day make the most civilised nations blush."

Though many of the old boyards listened to this manly harangue with indifference, if not with actual dislike, the young nobles were affected by it even to tears. To them it opened up new paths to distinction, and seemed, in raising the dignity and power of their country, to add a greater brilliancy to the rank they bore. But whatever of discontent lingered amongst those who loved ever to look back to the dead past, rather than to press forward with the living present—to collect fading laurels from half-forgotten graves, rather than to gain fresh ones by deeds of heroic activity—it dared no longer show itself. The czar had won the people, and he reigned now doubly absolute—by the law of the empire, and by the force of genius. Real joy dwelt for a while at St. Petersburg, and public festivities were prolonged by private hospitalities. The czar gave a series of public dinners,

to which all classes of the people were invited; and the illustrious monarch went from table to table amongst his guests, and conversed freely, even with those of the most humble condition, concerning their trades and occupations. The nobles, in their turn, gave balls and public entertainments on a very grand scale; the mercantile classes had their social festivals also; even the artisans and serfs drank their bad brandy with an air of triumph; and St. Petersburg presented a scene of rejoicing which had never been known beneath its cold sky before. Yet under and around the great city of the swamp lay the bones of more than 100,000 men, victims of its creation; sacrificed to the iron will of the brilliant despot, whose restless energy and deep-seeing genius remoulded his people, and, in this wild spot, even changed the face of nature! How great, sometimes how terrible, is the power of one large and original mind!

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

RETURN OF CHARLES XII. FROM TURKEY; CAPTURE OF STRALSUND; PETER AGAIN STARTS ON HIS TRAVELS; POLITICAL CONSPIRACY OF BARON GOERTZ; THE CZAR VISITS FRANCE; MEMORIAL PRESENTED TO HIM BY THE DOCTORS OF THE SORBONNE; PETER AND CATHERINE AT BERLIN; THEY RETURN TO RUSSIA.

SWEDEN, exhausted by its efforts, sought peace with Russia. The regency of Stockholm, despairing of the return of the king, came to a resolution to consult him no longer, and to make pacific proposals to the czar. This resolution was interrupted by the sudden reappearance of the king, after a stay of five years and some months in Bessarabia. Having passed through the most extraordinary adventures, and endured severe sufferings, Charles, on the 21st of October, 1714, presented himself, during the night, at the gates of the town of Stralsund, in the disguise of a courier. He had not been in a bed for sixteen nights, and his legs were so swollen from extreme fatigue, that his boots were obliged to be cut off. The fugitive king found Europe in a very different condition to that in which he had left it. The war between France, England, and Holland, was over.

Anne of England having made peace with the aged Louis XIV., had just gone to that bourne where warrior and politician, queen, subject, or beggar, alike remain in tranquillity. George I., elector of Hanover, had been called to the throne of Great Britain, and had taken from the territories of Sweden the duchy of Bremen and Verden. Frederic William, the new king of Prussia, had seized on Stettin and part of Pomerania; while the czar had enriched himself enormously at the expense of his former rival, Charles. In the north of Europe, Peter had acquired an uncontrollable ascendancy; and all the neighbouring princes referred their claims to him.

The spirit of the fallen Charles had not sunk with his fortunes; but his subjects were now too feeble to second his daring projects. They had lost their confidence, and were no longer disposed to seek in



battle nobler terms than they could obtain by arbitration. But when Charles applied to the citizens of Stockholm for money to raise a force equal to his necessities, his generous people, who pitied their wild king even while they blamed him, complied, as far as possible, with his wishes. His rash conduct has been described as resulting not from the fury of despair, but rather from the gallantry of a nature that never could be penetrated by despair. Shutting himself up in Stralsund, which was made celebrated by his connection with it, he undertook its defence, with a garrison of about 9,000 men, against the combined army of Prussians, Danes, and Saxons, amounting to 36,000 men. Charles defended the place inch by inch; and when it was at length reduced to a heap of ruins, he succeeded in escaping before it surrendered to the assailants.\* He made his way to Carlsrona; and, though so near his capital, he yet resolved never to enter it again until he had obtained some signal victory. Regarding his people only as born to become soldiers to carry out his projects, he issued orders for raising men throughout his whole kingdom. Miserable Sweden! infatuated king!

While the sun of Charles was thus setting, the power of Peter was approaching its utmost height. Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, and nearly all Finland, had been acquired by him. He was ready to protect them by war if necessary; but not averse to peace, if his adversaries desired it. Almost every day he created some new regulations or establishments in connection with the navy, army, the commerce, or the laws. About 400,000 men were employed in the public works at St. Petersburg, which rapidly became a place of great commerce and wealth. The czar, however, in his anxiety for its prosperity, committed an act of folly

and injustice; for he prohibited all goods imported into Russia at Archangel from being sent to Moscow.

Peter now resolved to undertake a second journey through the principal countries of Europe. The time was eminently favourable for such an expedition; for he had established his reforms at home upon a secure basis, and he had nothing to fear from enemies abroad. He had performed his first journey with the view of obtaining information concerning the arts and manufactures of the places he visited; but in the second he desired to examine the secrets of foreign courts, and the political systems of Europe. He left Russia in 1716, accompanied by the czarina Catherine, and followed by the gratitude of his people. His journey was a kind of triumphal progress, and he was generally received with public rejoicings and festivities. Catherine, who was approaching her confinement, was compelled to rest for a short time at Schwerin, while Peter pursued his way to Holland. The czarina soon followed him, but was compelled to pause at Wesel, where she was delivered of a son, whose brief existence only disappointed the hopes of his father. Such was Catherine's anxiety to rejoin her husband, that, ten days after her confinement, she accompanied him to Amsterdam.

The czar went to Copenhagen, and had an interview with the king of Denmark, who received him with great distinction. He then visited the king of Prussia, and paused at many places, either from motives of pleasure or for the sake of making observations. All this time he travelled in a very simple manner, avoiding all show or parade whatever. An amusing incident arose out of this love of simplicity in so great a man. He arrived late one night at Nymegen, in a common post-chaise, and accompanied by only two attendants. As

\* The daring and energy of this extraordinary man during this period, is thus graphically described by his biographer Voltaire:—"Nothing was able to move him; he employed the day in making ditches and intrenchments behind the walls, and in the night he sallied out upon the enemy. In the meantime Stralsund was battered in breach, the bombs fell as thick as hail upon the houses, and half the town was reduced to ashes. The citizens, however, so far from complaining, were filled with the highest veneration for their royal master, whose fatigues, temperance, and courage astonished them. He inspired them with similar qualities; and, under him, they all became soldiers: they accompanied him in all his sallies, and served him in the place of a second garrison. One day, as the king was dictating some

letters to his secretary, to be sent to Sweden, a bomb fell on the house, penetrated the roof, and burst near the apartment where he was. One-half of the floor was shattered to pieces. The closet where the king was employed, partly formed out of a thick wall, resisted the explosion; and, by an astonishing piece of fortune, none of the splinters that flew about in the air entered at the closet door, which happened to be open. The report of the bomb, and the noise it occasioned in the house, which seemed ready to fall, made the secretary drop his pen. 'What is the matter?' said the king, with a placid air, 'why do you not write?' The secretary could only exclaim, 'Ah, sire! the bomb!' 'Well,' continued the king, 'what has the bomb to do with the letter I am dictating to you? Go on.'



his frugal supper consisted only of poached eggs and a little bread and cheese, he was much astonished when, the next morning, the landlord presented a bill of one hundred ducats for his entertainment. Peter remonstrated, and asked if eggs were so very scarce in that neighbourhood. "No," answered the landlord; "but emperors are." The czar settled the bill; for he must have felt that, statesman as he was, he had for once been overreached.

On reaching Amsterdam, Peter was received with an exhibition of feeling which surpassed enthusiasm. There the honest ship-builders regarded him as their pupil; and the workmen looked upon him as a great man who had given additional dignity to labour; and they remembered the time he performed the like work with themselves. They found his manners unchanged: the great emperor of Russia talked to them as familiarly as, about eighteen years before, Master Peter the amateur carpenter had done. The little cottage at Sardam, in which he had dwelt, though scarcely more than a hovel, had been improved and carefully preserved. It was known as "The Prince's House." On re-entering it, after so long an absence, Peter desired to be left alone; and there, for a while, he remained absorbed by reflection of a kind it is not difficult to divine. Wonder for the past, and grateful joy for the present, no doubt filled that strong mind, as, reflecting upon the strange vicissitudes of life, he beheld the scene of his early labours; while his imagination, speeding to the tideless Baltic, saw upon its broad basin their result in the triumphant fleet of Russia.

The czar remained three months in Holland, chiefly because the Hague, then regarded as the centre of the negotiations of Europe, and crowded with travellers and foreign ministers, afforded him an opportunity of making certain political observations. A cunning adventurer, named Baron Goertz, who had acquired the confidence of Charles XII., and desired to bring about an alliance between that fallen monarch and the czar, had projected a great revolution throughout Europe; and many secret communications concerning it were passing in the diplomatic circles of that place. This project was of a remarkable kind, for kings and chief ministers were the conspirators. Amongst other wild plans, it was designed to drive George I. from the throne of Eng-

land, and to set the son of James II. in his place. Charles XII., on being reconciled to Peter, was to make a descent upon Scotland, and carry the plan into execution by calling to arms all the partisans of the Stuart family. It appears that the czar was favourable to the designs of these diplomatic revolutionists, and that he with difficulty avoided becoming implicated in them. Happily these plans were discovered, and communicated to the king of England; and, at his desire, the States-general placed Baron Goertz under arrest. George also put the Swedish ambassador at London into confinement; and the two were examined like some great criminals; as indeed they were. Charles was indignant that his ambassadors had been so insulted, and maintained a disdainful silence towards England and Holland. Peter, on the detection of the conspiracy with which he was not identified, though he was favourable to it, wrote a long letter to George I., full of compliments and congratulations, and assurances of a sincere friendship. George did not believe a word of these protestations; but it was not politic to quarrel with so powerful a monarch as the czar; and he assumed a satisfaction which he did not feel.

In the meantime Peter left Holland, and proceeded on a visit to Paris, where great preparations were made for receiving him with a becoming splendour. Marshal Tesse, with many of the nobility, a squadron of the guards, and the king's coaches, advanced to meet him. The czar, actuated by a real or pretended contempt for splendour, rode on so rapidly, that he left the escort far behind, and entered Paris, attended only by four gentlemen. The retiring habits of the czar must have disappointed the French people, who had prepared many *fêtes* and entertainments in his honour, which were rendered nugatory by the rapidity with which he travelled. The Duke of Orleans, then regent during the infancy of Louis XV., received Peter at the Louvre, where the state apartments were prepared for himself and his retinue. The czar declined this grandeur. "I am a soldier," said he; "bread and beer are all I want; I like small rooms better than large. I do not wish to move about in state, and tire so many people." The same evening he took up his lodgings at the other end of the town, at the Hôtel Lesdiguière, which belonged to Marshal Villeroy. Here he was visited, the next day, by the regent, and, the one following,



by the infant king. This visit courtesy obliged the czar to return; but he did so in the evening, in as quiet a manner as possible. The household troops were placed under arms, and the young king brought to the czar's coach. So great was the crowd that thronged about the royal child, that Peter felt uneasy for his safety, and, taking him into his arms, carried him for some time.

However averse the czar might be to ceremony or ostentation, he could not but be pleased with many of the delicate attentions he met with in France. On dining with the Duke d'Antin, at his seat three leagues from Paris, Peter observed that a handsome portrait of himself had been recently put up in the dining-room. Touched by the compliment, it is said he felt that true politeness was an ingredient in the nature of the French. Another incident of the same kind must have given him a far greater satisfaction. On going to see medals struck in that gallery of the Louvre devoted to the artists of the kings of France, one dropping from the die, fell at the feet of the czar. He stooped, picked it up, and found it to be a medal of himself, with a figure representing fame on the reverse. Peter and all his attendants were presented with copies of this medal in gold. On visiting the other artists in the Louvre, all their finest efforts were laid at his feet, with a request that he would deign to accept of them. When he went to see the tapestry of the Gobelins, the carpets of the *Savonnerie*, the *ateliers* of the king's sculptors, painters, goldsmiths, and mathematical instrument-makers, whatever engaged his eye was offered to him in the name of the sovereign. On his visit to the Academy of Sciences, he with his own hand corrected several errors in old maps of the Russian dominions. He even became a member of the academy, and afterwards kept up a correspondence concerning experiments and discoveries with that distinguished body.

The most earnest minds in France admired the experienced glance and skilful hand with which he selected such objects as he designed to carry back with him to Russia, and the masters whom he engaged for the instruction of his people. Artists and manufacturers were surprised at his knowledge of their professions. They observed, that "his questions uniformly gave proof of his knowledge, and excited admiration of the sagacity of an enlarged mind, which was as prompt to comprehend in-

formation as it was eager to gain it. While travelling through France on his return, the czar would often leave his carriage, and, entering the fields, fall into conversation with the labourers. He desired them to explain the use of their agricultural instruments, and took sketches of them with his own hand. One day his attention was attracted by seeing a person of a different dress and superior appearance working with the labourers. The czar immediately interrogated this man; and then, turning to his attendants, observed—"Look at this good country priest! With the labour of his own hands he procures cider, wine, and money to boot. Remind me of this when we are in Russia again. I will endeavour to stimulate our priests by this example, and, by teaching them to till the soil, rescue them from their sloth and wretchedness."

The occasion on which the czar exhibited the greatest excitement while in France, was at his visit to the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu. But it was not the beauty of the design or sculpture that attracted him. His thoughts were rather with the dust that lay beneath that magnificent mausoleum. His mind dwelt upon the character of the great statesman, which these things were designed to perpetuate. Giving way to a transient enthusiasm, Peter exclaimed earnestly—"Thou great man! I would have given thee one-half of my dominions to have learnt of thee how to govern the other!" Thus do the truly great ever recognise and admit the claims of each other.

When the czar visited the mausoleum of the wise priest and statesman, the doctors of the Sorbonne placed a memorial in his hands, with the object of bringing about a reunion of the Greek and Latin churches, by inducing Peter to recognise the spiritual authority of the pope. The division of the Christian church into that of the West and the East, was completed about the middle of the eleventh century, when the pope at Rome, and the patriarch at Constantinople, severally anathematised each other, and all further communion between their respective churches ceased. This schism the theological doctors of the university thought to heal at the expense of a piece of parchment; as if such a monarch as the czar would be at all likely to acknowledge the authority of the pope in any shape whatever. His path lay in quite a different direction; and it is not rational to suppose that Peter would throw his country into confusion, and encounter the enmity of



the Russian clergy, and perhaps the whole population of his empire, to bring about an event, the result of which would be to introduce an authority into it, differing from, and claiming to be superior to, his own. The wily doctors artfully confined their memorial almost entirely to softening down this point. They spoke of the liberties enjoyed by the Gallican church; from which they concluded that the Russian church would forfeit nothing in that respect, should the proposed union take place. They also asserted that the popes were subject to the councils, and that a decree of the supreme pontiff was not a rule of faith. Peter cared nothing for these matters; and he had no intention of placing a yoke upon his shoulders, though it might be a very light one, and fit so well as not to gall the wearer in any direction. Never mind the lightness: why wear a yoke at all, especially when there was no necessity for doing so? Still the czar received the memorial with good humour; and, answering that he was a soldier, unaccustomed to disputations of that kind, referred the matter to the Russian bishops. They, it may be anticipated, at once indignantly rejected it. The pope, also offended that the overture had failed, expressed a dissatisfaction at its having been attempted; and the meddlers of the Sorbonne were blamed on all sides; as meddlers generally are, and always deserve to be.

However pleasantly the czar treated this application at the time, he afterwards thought it proper to express his real feeling towards the papal authority, in order to dissipate any needless apprehensions which his subjects might entertain on such a matter. With this object, when, in 1718, he expelled the Jesuits out of his dominions, he instituted a burlesque ceremonial for the entertainment of the people, in ridicule of the pontiff of the Roman church. At the Russian court was a vain old man, named Jotoff or Sotoff, who, in earlier years, had taught the czar to write, but who, in the decline of his life, occupied a position analogous to that of a buffoon. On this dotard, the czar whimsically said that he would confer one of the most eminent dignities in the known world. Jotoff accordingly had the title of pope bestowed upon him, together with a salary of 2,000 roubles, and a house at St. Petersburg in the quarter of the Tartars. Jotoff was enthroned by the mob, led by buffoons, and harangued by four men who stammered.

His mock holiness then created a body of mimic cardinals; and after they had all drank themselves into a state of staggering intoxication, paraded the streets in procession, accompanied by rough music playing out of time, and the clattering of pots and pans, to the intense delight of the mob, to whose not over-refined taste this drunken carnival was admirably adapted. A military procession and solemnity for some great victory, would scarcely have pleased them so much. This satirical ceremony was retained for some years after the death of Jotoff, and performed both in St. Petersburg and Moscow. Though, at first sight, it appeared only a mere popular orgie, yet it had the effect of confirming the national aversion to a church which assumed a power of control and anathema over kings and nations.

Before the czar left France, he expressed a desire to have an interview with the celebrated Madame de Maintenon, the widow of Louis XIV., then in the decline of her chequered life. The similarity that existed between the marriage of Louis and his own, excited his curiosity. Yet there was almost as much difference between the two ladies as between their respective husbands, who were the most unlike of men. Catherine was altogether uneducated; while the mind of Madame de Maintenon had been cultivated up to that exotic point where luxuriance sinks into weakness. The first was a child of nature; the second lived the artificial life of an over-refined court. The first was in some respects a heroine; the last merely a fascinating woman. Peter had not taken Catherine with him to France, because, with a delicacy of feeling scarcely to be expected in him, he feared that the rigid ceremony of the French court might embarrass her, and that its frequenters might not sufficiently estimate the merits of a woman who, from the banks of the Pruth to the shores of Finland, had, at her husband's side, faced death both by sea and land.

The czar discerned in the luxurious extravagance of the French court, a sign of the unhealthy condition of a nation which was then silently floating towards the terrible convulsion in which an infuriated people trampled king, government, church, religion—everything beneath their feet. Peter felt so strongly on the subject, that he observed, he was sorry for France and for its infant king, and believed that the



latter was on the point of losing his kingdom through luxuries and superfluities. While the czar condemned the extravagance, and despised the high-breeding, of the French courtiers, yet many amongst them formed a generous estimate of his character. The following description of Peter, by an author attached to the court, we will quote, on account of the value of contemporary criticism respecting so remarkable a man:—"His deportment is full of dignity and confidence, as becomes an absolute master. He has large and bright eyes, with a penetrating, and occasionally stern glance. His motions, which are abrupt and hasty, betray the violence of his passions, and the impetuosity of his disposition. His orders succeed each other rapidly and imperiously. He dismisses with a word, with a sign, without allowing himself to be thwarted by time, place, or circumstance, now and then forgetting even the rules of decorum; yet with the regent and the young king he maintains his state, and regulates all his movements according to the points of a strict and proud etiquette. For the rest, the court discovered in him more great qualities than bad ones; it considered his faults to be merely trivial and superficial. It remarked, that he was usually sober, and that he gave way only now and then to excessive intemperance; that, regular in his habits of living, he always went to bed at nine o'clock, rose at four, and was never for a moment unemployed; and, accordingly, that he was well-informed, and seemed to have a better knowledge of naval affairs and fortification, than any man in France."

On leaving that country, the czar induced many French artists and other skilful persons to follow him, with the object of promoting the exercise of their professions in Russia. No government seemed actuated by any ungenerous feelings towards him in this matter. "All nations," observes Voltaire, "where he travelled, prided themselves in seconding his design of transporting the arts into a new country, and in concurring to this kind of creation."

The czar rejoined Catherine at Amsterdam, and they proceeded together to Berlin, to pay a visit to Frederic William,\* the king of Prussia, who, to use the expressive language of Mr. Macaulay, "must be allowed to have possessed some talents for administration, but whose character was

disfigured by odious vices, and whose eccentricities were such as had never before been seen out of a madhouse." Though Frederic was so mean that he half-starved his children, and frequently had food in a state unfit to be eaten placed upon the royal table, yet he received his illustrious visitors with as much respect as his rude nature could be capable of. The czar, on arriving at Berlin, drove to a private lodging, where he received a message that the king would wait upon him the next day, at noon. Before the appointed time, a *cortège* of royal carriages came to bring the czar to the palace; but the officers who accompanied them were told that he was already with the king. He had gone out privately by another door, with a view of avoiding that ceremony which he regarded as obstructive of freedom, and a waste of time. A king who dressed like a common soldier, and sat in an old-fashioned wooden arm-chair, possessed a recommendation to the good-will of the eccentric czar. Peter, Catherine, and Frederic William were a strange trio. "Had Charles XII. been with them," says Voltaire, "four crowned heads would have been seen together, with less fastidiousness about them than a German bishop or a Roman cardinal." Though the boisterous king was sufficiently well pleased with his guests, yet the manners of Peter and Catherine were by no means refined enough for the then petty court of Berlin, which, in this respect, was more critical than that of Paris. The queen thought Peter rough, and Catherine homely; and, therefore, the ladies of the court thought so too. One of the latter, the Margravine de Bareith, gave an account in her memoirs of the reception of the illustrious strangers at court. From this description it may be seen how difficult it is for little minds to estimate great ones. The margravine remarked, that when Peter approached to salute the queen, that her majesty looked as if she would rather be excused. On another occasion he took her hand so heartily, that the royal prude desired him to be more respectful. Peter laughed, and said that she was more delicate than his Catherine. But the supercilious description of the latter by the margravine, while it is a bit of odd and, probably, truthful portrait-painting, exhibits the hypercritical spirit in which the czarina was observed. "She is," says the narrator, "short and lusty, remarkably coarse, and without grace or animation. One need only see her to be

\* The father of Frederic the Great.



satisfied of her low birth. At the first blush one would take her for a German actress. Her clothes looked as if bought at a doll-shop; everything was so old-fashioned and so bedecked with silver and tinsel. She was decorated with a dozen orders, portraits of saints and relics; which occasioned such a clatter, that when she walked, one would suppose an ass with bells was approaching."

Peter, during his tour, purchased great quantities of pictures, chiefly of the Dutch and Flemish school; cabinets of birds and insects, a large collection of books, and

whatever appeared likely to ornament the new city, to which he had given his name. Amongst these valuables was a great hollow globe, eleven feet in diameter, whose inside represented the celestial, and the outside the terrestrial, sphere. This was presented to him by the king of Denmark. With these treasures of art and literature he subsequently laid the foundation of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, the idea of which he took from that of Paris, of which he had been elected a member during a visit to that capital.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

MISCONDUCT OF THE CZAREVITCH ALEXIS; PETER EXPOSTULATES WITH HIM; PETER, WHILE ON HIS TRAVELS, COMMANDS HIS SON TO MEET HIM AT COPENHAGEN; THE LATTER GOES TO VIENNA, AND CLAIMS THE PROTECTION OF THE EMPEROR; THE CZAR PROMISES TO PARDON HIS SON IF HE WILL RETURN; ALEXIS DOES SO, AND IS ARRESTED, IMPRISONED, AND FINALLY PLACED ON HIS TRIAL FOR TREASON; HIS CONDEMNATION AND DEATH.

THE czar arrived at St. Petersburg, from his foreign tour, on the 21st of October, 1717, and his attention was soon engaged by an incident of a peculiar character.

His son, the czarévitch Alexis, now nine-and-twenty years of age, had long been a source of anxiety to Peter. Alexis, even from his youth, had shown an aversion to the reforms of his father, and selected his friends and advisers from among the disaffected nobles and priests, who were opposed to all change. These bigoted persons confirmed in the mind of the czarévitch the lessons of his ignorant and superstitious mother, who had taught him that the changes the czar effected in the government and manners of the people, were acts offensive to God. The obstinate mental blindness of Endoxia induced Peter to repudiate her; an act which he followed by taking a mistress to his bed. The czarína's desire for revenge was greater than the piety of which she made so much parade, and she chose a lover to supply the place of a disgusted husband. The czar discovered her misconduct, and, with his customary severity, caused her paramour to be impaled; after which he solemnly divorced his dishonoured wife, and condemned her to pass her life in the cloisters.

Peter's active life prevented him from paying much personal attention to his son; but he caused able foreign preceptors to be placed about him. So intense were the prejudices which had been instilled into the mind of the young prince, that he hated these persons merely because they were foreigners. Yet, though weak-minded, he was not without capacity, and seems to have profited to some extent by the tuition he received from them. He wrote and spoke German readily, and had made some progress in mathematics. Though removed from the influence of his mother, it yet hung about him, and exerted a power over him; and the ecclesiastical books which the priests put in his hands were his ruin. He placed an implicit confidence in these works, the composition of narrow-minded men; and fancied that he read in their pages so many execrations of the labours in which his father was engaged. Indeed, priests were the frequent companions of Alexis, and they acquired an absolute ascendancy over him. They persuaded him that the whole nation abhorred his father's innovations; that from the fits to which the czar was subject, it might be concluded that he would not live long; and that the way to conciliate the affections of the people was



to show an aversion to novelties. Alexis listened with satisfaction to these insidious suggestions; and by so doing, became a passive conspirator against his father.

The marriage of the czar with Catherine in 1707, and the fertility of that marriage, still further irritated the mind of the prince, and he gave himself up to habits of drunkenness and dissipation. His marriage, in 1711, with the Princess of Wolfenbüttele, failed to exercise any reforming influence. The unfortunate lady, ill-treated by her husband, destitute of all comfort, and even of those things which to the high-born are regarded as necessities of existence, lingered in suffering until the November of 1715. She left a son, who afterwards ascended the throne which his father forfeited by his offences.

The czar appears to have been touched by the death of his daughter-in-law; and he beheld with great grief the unaltered mind and temper of his son. What course would he pursue when, in the natural succession of events, he ascended the throne? Peter resolved that he would not permit a graceless boy to overthrow the labours of his life. After the death of the princess, the czar addressed a letter to Alexis, in which, after reviewing the charges brought against him, and censuring the ruinous course he was following, thus concluded:—"I will still wait a while to see if you will amend. If not, know that I will deprive you of the succession as a useless limb is cut off. Do not imagine I am only frightening you, nor would I have you to rely on the title of being my eldest son; for since I do not spare my own life for the good of my country and the prosperity of my people, why should I spare yours? I would prefer to transmit the crown to an entire stranger who merited it, than to my own son who had proved himself unworthy of the trust."

This menacing letter, in which the father yet mingled with the statesman and the judge, elicited from Alexis only a brief reply, and that of so strange and submissive a kind, as to create an instant doubt of the sincerity of the writer. "God is my witness," said the prince; "and I swear upon my soul, that I will never claim the succession. I commit my children\* into your hands; and for myself, I ask for nothing more than a subsistence during my life."

\* Alexis had but one son by the Princess of Wolfenbüttele; but he had also illegitimate children.

The czar doubted the good faith of his son, and suspected dissimulation; he was also deeply pained that he could not gain the confidence and co-operation of his natural successor. He wrote again to Alexis a letter, in which pathos, entreaty, and threats were combined. "I observe," he said, "that all you speak of in your letter is the succession, as if I stood in need of your consent. I represented to you the grief your behaviour has given me for so many years, and you do not speak of it. The exhortations of a father make no impression on you. I have brought myself to write to you once more; but for the last time. If you despise my counsels while I am living, what regard will you pay to them after my death? Though you may at present intend to keep your promises, yet those bushy beards (*i.e.*, priests) will be able to wind you as they please, and induce you to break your word. It is you on whom these people rely. You have no gratitude to him who gave you life. Since you have been of proper age, did you ever assist him in his labours? Do you not blame, do you not detest everything I do for the good of my people? I have all the reason in the world to believe, that if you survive me, you will destroy all that I have done. Amend; make yourself worthy of the succession, or become a monk. Let me have your answer, either in writing or personally, or I will deal with you as with a malefactor."

Alexis might easily have conciliated his father by a promise, made in evident sincerity, that he would change his conduct and dismiss his evil advisers. This he was unwilling to do; and his obstinacy must have confirmed the suspicions of the czar, that his son only waited for his death in order to commence the destruction of the cherished labours of his life. Alexis pretended illness, and wrote a short, cold letter to his father, merely stating that he intended to embrace the monkish life, and desiring the consent of the czar to that effect. Such a decision did not appear natural in a young man; and must have been regarded by the acute Peter as an evasion. Still the disquieted father visited his son prior to setting out on his travels to Germany and France; and gave him six months to reflect upon his future conduct, and to abandon his monastic intentions, if he desired to fit himself to become an emperor. Yet the very day that the czar left the capital, Alexis rose from



the bed to which he pretended that illness had confined him, and, in a riotous banquet, celebrated with his evil advisers the departure of his father!

During the absence of the czar, Alexis never wrote a line to him—a circumstance which caused him both disappointment and irritation. At Copenhagen Peter received information that his unworthy son only admitted into his presence such evil-minded persons as humoured his prejudices and fostered his discontent. The outraged father forthwith wrote to his ungrateful son, that he must at once choose the cloister or the throne; but that if he valued the latter, to meet him at Copenhagen. The czarevitch wrote that he would come; but his priestly counsellors suggested to him that it might be dangerous to put himself into the hands of a provoked and vindictive father. Acting upon this sinister advice, he resolved on a step of the most suspicious and fatal kind. Drawing a considerable sum of money from Prince Mentschikoff, under the pretext of paying the expenses of his journey to his father, he departed; but, on reaching the borders of Livonia, took the road to Vienna, and threw himself on the protection of the emperor, Charles VI., at whose court he trusted to remain until the death of the czar.

The emperor was displeased at a step which, if he countenanced, would place him in a false position with respect to a powerful neighbour. He would not keep Alexis at his court; and, as he could not deny him the shelter he sought, sent him to a fortress in the Tyrol, from which Alexis went, under a feigned name, to the castle of St. Elmo at Naples. The czar traced the fugitive, and sent M. Tolstoi, a privy councillor, and Romanzoff, a captain of the guards, to him with a letter. This communication, dated from Spa, July 10th, 1717, ran as follows:—"I now write to you, and for the last time, to let you know that you had best comply with my will, which Tolstoi and Romanzoff will make known to you. If you obey me, I assure you, and I promise before God, that I will not punish you; so far from it, that if you return, I will love you better than ever. But if you do not, by virtue of the power I have received from God, as your father, I pronounce against you my eternal curse; and as your sovereign, I assure you, I shall find ways to punish you; in which I hope, as my cause is just, God will take it in hand, and assist

me in revenging it. Remember further, that I never used compulsion with you. Was I under any obligation to leave you to your own option? Had I been for forcing you, was not the power in my hand? It was but to speak the word, and I should have been obeyed." Alexis was induced to return, in compliance with the wishes of his father—a circumstance to which it seems he was led by the persuasions of his mistress, Aphrosina, who had been bribed by Tolstoi to exert her influence over him to that effect.

Alexis reached Moscow on the 13th of February, 1718, and the very day of his arrival he went and paid his respects to his father, and had a long private interview with him. The citizens believed that a reconciliation had taken place between the father and the son, and that everything was forgotten. But the next morning they were startled by the deep notes of the great bell of Moscow, which tolled solemnly; and by seeing the regiments of guards under arms. The members of the senate, and the nobles of the highest rank, were summoned to meet the czar at the castle; and the bishops, archimandrites, and professors of divinity, met in the cathedral. When these solemn preliminaries were over, Alexis was brought before his father, deprived of his sword, and a prisoner! In this circumstance the czar appears to have been guilty of a breach of faith, as he had promised to pardon his son if the latter would but return and submit himself. Alexis had returned, and instead of procuring the pardon and tenderness which had been promised, found himself under arrest. This event has created a strong feeling against the czar in the minds of many historic writers, who have done their utmost to blacken his character, as though he was the offender in this painful case. Up to this point he had exhibited more forbearance than could have been expected from a man of his impulsive and violent nature, and he deserves rather the compassion, than the censure of the world. It was no small crime to set at nought a father's love—to practise year after year upon his heart—to exhibit the blackest ingratitude—and to torture such a monarch with the fear that all his labours for the advancement of a great empire would be trampled into the dust by a bigoted and triumphant successor, who would openly rejoice over a parent's grave amid the acclamations of



servile and ignorant priests and low dissolute fellows, who would delight in rending to pieces that growing civilisation which their base natures could not comprehend. Certainly, in causing the arrest of his son, the tortured father broke his word; but it is difficult to censure this inconsistency in the conduct of a distracted monarch.

Alexis, on being brought as a prisoner into the presence of his father, threw himself at his feet, and with a flood of tears presented to him a paper, in which he acknowledged his offences, declared himself unworthy of the succession, and only solicited his life. The czar raised the ingrate, and taking him into an adjoining cabinet, questioned him as to his advisers, or rather his accomplices, in what he regarded as an incomplete and baffled conspiracy, declaring that if he concealed anything relating to his escape, his head should answer for it.

Peter then returned with his son into the council-chamber, where the czar read a public declaration, in which he reproached the prince with his indolence and his dissolute habits; for his intimacy with those who advocated ancient abuses; for his bad conduct to his wife, and his violation of conjugal faith, by forming a connection during her lifetime with a woman of low birth; and for going to Vienna, and placing himself under the protection of the emperor, by which he had slandered his father, declaring that his life was not safe in Russia unless he renounced the succession, and even going so far as to desire the emperor openly to defend him by force of arms.

After these charges the czar proceeded to pass the following sentence of deposition against the offender:—"Such was the manner in which our son returned; and though his flight and his calumnies deserved death, those crimes our fatherly affection forgives. But his notorious unworthiness and immorality will not allow us, in conscience, to leave him the succession to the empire; it being too manifest that his conduct would subvert the glory of the nation, and occasion the loss of all the provinces recovered by our arms. Our subjects would be extremely to be pitied; since, leaving them under such a successor, would be plunging them into a condition much worse than any that they have ever experienced. Accordingly, by our paternal power, in virtue of which, according to the laws of our empire, every private subject of

ours can at pleasure disinherit a son, and pursuant to our prerogative as sovereign, and in regard to the welfare of our dominions, we for ever deprive our said son, Alexis, of succeeding after us to the throne of Russia, on account of his crimes and unworthiness; even though not a single person of our family should exist at the time of our decease. And we constitute, appoint, and declare, in the want of a mor- aged successor, our second son, Peter,\* young as he is, successor to the said throne after us. Accursed be our son Alexis, if ever, at any time, he shall claim the said succession, or go about to procure it. We also require our faithful subjects that, pursuant to this appointment and our will, they acknowledge and consider our said son Peter as our lawful successor, and that they confirm the same by oath at the altar on the holy gospels, and kissing the cross. And all those who shall, at any time whatever, oppose this our will, and dare to consider our son Alexis as successor, or assist him to that end, we declare traitors to us and to their country; and we have ordered these presents to be everywhere published, that no person may plead ignorance."

After this document had been read, the prince signed an act of renunciation, in which he acknowledged his exclusion to be just, on account of his unworthiness, and took an oath to submit himself in every particular to his father's will. The czar then proceeded to the cathedral, where these documents were read to the assembled ecclesiastics, who testified their approbation by affixing their signatures to copies of them. An oath recognising the renunciation and order of succession, was afterwards administered to the army and navy, and to every subject of the czar.

It is natural to suppose that the disgraced and disinherited Alexis was now set at liberty; but such was not the case. The czar had solemnly called God to witness, that if his son would return to Moscow, he would not only pardon him, but even love him better than ever. The extorted renunciation might be justified on the ground of political expediency; but by his submission in this respect, Alexis had purchased his pardon and his freedom. These were his right, as he had not committed any new offence to justify the revocation of his father's promise of mercy. Yet, instead of

\* Son of the empress Catherine; but who died 15th April, 1719.



obtaining his freedom, he was led away into close confinement, where no one but the agents of the czar were permitted to approach him. In this condition the dejected Alexis underwent a second examination, first by his father, and secondly by commissioners. Peter felt that he had no ordinary difficulty to deal with; and he feared that Alexis, if set at liberty, might again become the tool of the factious party which had already poisoned his mind against the improvements of his father. Thus, in the event of the czar's death, the prince would probably be induced to revoke his renunciation of the crown, and a servile war might ensue, in which the recent reforms might be overthrown. Again Peter felt the necessity of crushing the disaffection of which the weak prince was the instrument and the centre, by ascertaining the names of his ill-advisers, and punishing them as conspirators, if their offence could be brought under such a term. The old party yet possessed a power in the state, and the czar resolved to administer such a correction as should strike its adherents with a salutary terror.

To obtain the necessary information for this proceeding, the czar had placed his son in confinement, and subjected him to a constant inquisition, under a threat that he should be punished with death if he concealed or misstated any facts that were known to him. The mind of the miserable prince was still further weakened by the influence of terror, and he seems to have attempted to save his life by making such confessions as he thought were desired.

One subject on which the prince was questioned, was concerning a letter written from St. Petersburg, after the flight of the prince Alexis, by M. Beyer, the emperor's resident there. The substance of it was, that a mutiny was in progress in the Russian army in Mecklenburg, and that the officers talked of sending Catherine and her infant son to the prison where the repudiated czarina was confined, and of placing Alexis upon his father's throne. There had been a sedition in the Russian troops alluded to, and though speedily suppressed, it gave an air of probability to the design spoken of in the letter. Yet, if this design existed, the prince was not implicated in it, nor was the letter addressed to him; he had only received a copy of it, sent from Vienna. Still the czar put this question to the prince—"When you saw, by

Beyer's letter, that there was a revolt in the Mecklenburg army, you was glad of it. I apprehend you had some view, and that you would have declared for the rebels even in my lifetime?" This was interrogating the prince as to his secret sentiments, which, if they may be owned to a father who, by his counsels, would rectify them, may be concealed from a judge, who is to determine only from attested facts. The hidden sentiments of the heart are not within the cognizance of a court of judicature. Alexis might have concealed or disowned his thoughts; but, with an inexplicable infatuation, he answered in writing, "Had the rebels invited me in your lifetime, I should probably have joined them, had they been strong enough."

By this strange and most unnecessary confession, elicited by a mode adverse to the judicial proceedings of the most enlightened countries of Europe, Alexis furnished the ground of a charge of treason against him. But other evidence existed, of a kind calculated to criminate the now bewildered prince. The rough draught of a letter, written by him from Vienna to the senators and archbishops of Russia, was discovered amongst his papers. It contained this passage—"The continual injuries which I have undeservedly suffered, have obliged me to quit my country. It was very narrowly I escaped being shut up in a convent; they who have confined my mother were about using me in the same manner. I am under the protection of a great prince, until it please God that I may return to my country. It is my desire you will not forsake me at present." The concluding words, *at present*, which might be supposed to cover some treasonable project, were drawn through with a pen—afterwards restored—then again crossed out; which sufficiently showed the writer to be in a state of perturbation; giving himself up to his resentment one minute, and repenting of it the next. Moreover, this letter never reached its destination, as it was intercepted by the court of Vienna, which had no intention of embroiling itself in a dispute with that of Russia.

Several witnesses were brought forward, whose depositions proved the sullen opposition and the hostile mind which Alexis entertained towards his father; but they proved nothing of a more criminal nature. A man named Afanassief maintained that, on one occasion, he heard the prince de-



clare—"I will say something to the bishops, and they will repeat it to the priests, and the priests will tell it to their parishioners, and I shall be placed upon the throne, even though it were against my will." His own mistress, Aphrosina, gave evidence of a similar kind. But, observes Voltaire, "none of the accusations were very precise. Instead of a digested plan, a connected intrigue, a conspiracy, or an association, and still less any preparatives, here was only a discontented, unruly son, complaining of his father, flying from his presence, and even wishing for his death. But this son was heir to the greatest monarchy of our hemisphere; and, in his situation, no fault was small."

The mother of Alexis, and his sister, the Princess Mary, were implicated in these proceedings. The prince was charged with consulting them respecting his flight; and the Bishop of Rostof, who was in the confidence of all three, on being arrested, deposed that the imprisoned princesses had expressed some hopes of a change which would set them at liberty; and that it was by their advice that the prince fled into Germany, instead of joining his father at Copenhagen. It must be admitted, that the examination was conducted in an inquisitorial and merciless manner. Everything was collected that could in any way tell against the prince, and assist in composing a charge of constructive treason against him. Thus, a priest, named Jacques, was seized and put to the torture, with the object of wringing from him any secrets which the prince might have poured into his ear during the solemn confidence of the confessional. Under these circumstances, the priest acknowledged that Alexis had accused himself before God of having wished his father's death, to which he (the confessor) had responded, "God will forgive you; it is no more than what we all wish." The spectacle of a confessor accusing his penitent was a strange one. All proofs derived from auricular confessions are, by the canons of the church, not to be received in a court of justice. Such statements are regarded as secrets between God and the penitent; this rule and belief holds equally in the Greek and Roman churches. But Peter considered that the welfare of the empire was concerned, and he conducted his inquiries rather in the temper of a wronged and unforgiving parent, than with the dignified calmness and rigid impartiality of a judge.

The czar appears to have thought that sufficient was proved against the prince, not only to justify the reversal of the promise of pardon extended to him, but even to make it expedient to place him on his trial. But first, Peter wreaked his vengeance on the misleaders of his wretched son. Two bishops, two nobles, and fifty priests were put to death, and their heads exhibited in a ghastly circle around the scaffold. During this period, the public excitement was greatly increased by Moscow being declared in a state of siege, and no citizen permitted to leave it under pain of death.

When Peter had made a terrible example of the bigots whose influence had corrupted and ruined his son, he took the captive prince to St. Petersburg, where, four months afterwards, he was subjected to fresh examinations. At Moscow he had been questioned as to what communications had passed between him and the emperor at Vienna. That potentate had not admitted the prince to his presence; but the latter had applied to Count Schonbron, a lord of the bed-chamber, who said, "The emperor will not forsake you; and that, at the proper season, after your father's death, he will assist you with an armed force to ascend the throne." "My answer was," added the prince, "that is not what I ask. All I desire is, that the emperor will be pleased to grant me his protection." On the resumption of the interrogations at St. Petersburg, this point was revived, and a rigid inquiry instituted into all particulars concerning it. Whether the prince had forgotten his former statement, or whether, in his disordered state of mind, he had gradually accustomed himself to believe in the truth of assertions which were constantly put before him in the shape of affirmative queries, or whether the answer was merely extorted from his fears, cannot positively be determined. Certain it is, that he now made a statement, in writing, which greatly differed from his first simple and highly probable explanation. It ran thus:—"Intending in nothing to imitate my father, I sought to obtain the succession by any means whatever. I was for having it by foreign assistance; and if I had got my ends, and the emperor had done *what he promised me*, to procure the crown of Russia, even by open force, I would have spared nothing to have secured myself in the succession. For instance, had the emperor asked me, in return, some of my country's troops for service against any of his enemies, or large



sums of money, I would have willingly done everything he wished, even to the giving great presents to his ministers and generals. I would, at my own expense, have maintained the auxiliary troops with which he would have supplied me, to put me in possession of the crown of Russia; and, in short, I would have refrained from nothing to have accomplished my object."

This deposition has every appearance of having been extorted from the prince by threats, or drawn from him by hopes of pardon. It has also an air of falsehood; for it directly contradicts the former statement on the same subject, made by the prince at Moscow. This discrepancy seems to have been fatal to the cause of the distracted Alexis. The czar had commanded him to make a full confession of the names of all the accomplices of his elopement; and, from this statement, it was certain the prince had been guilty of prevarication, if not of concealment. It would, indeed, have been no more than honourable to suppress the names of those persons who were in his confidence; for to disclose them, was but to send these unhappy men to the scaffold; yet it was none the less a disobedience to the commands of the czar, and a crime in the sight of that inflexible parent. Peter resolved to punish his son for these suppressions; to bring him before a solemn tribunal, composed of the great officers of state, the judges, and the bishops; to charge him with high treason, and to leave the decision of the case in their hands.

It is not easy to sanction this severe and painful resolve. The conduct of the czar has found many to condemn, and but few to apologise for it. Though we must disapprove of Peter's proceedings, we cannot join in the vehemence of invective that has been

\* Bell, in his critical and reflective work on Russia, has the following remarks on these opinions of the great French writer:—"It would hardly lead to any profitable conclusion to discuss the subtle doctrine which a modern historian has laid down in reference to this extraordinary trial. If the question really lay between the life of one individual and the safety of an empire, political expediency would pronounce a sentence that would be irreconcilable with Christian equity. This is the only ground upon which the conduct of Peter will admit of justification—if, indeed, there be any justification for making a state necessity paramount to domestic obligations, and those immutable principles of justice which regulate the punishment by the measure of the offence. But we must not venture to judge of the actions of this monarch by a reference either to the laws of any other nation, or to any abstract code of right and wrong. He was the apostle of a mighty reformation.

used against him. Voltaire has placed both aspects of the case in what we regard as a tolerably impartial light; and we cannot do better than quote his sentiments upon it. He observes—"In this last interrogation Alexis says what he believes he should have done in case of a contest for his inheritance; an inheritance which he had not judicially renounced before his journey to Vienna and Naples. Now we see him deposing a second time, not what he has done, and what may be made obnoxious to the rigour of the law, but what he fancies he might one day have done; which of course comes not within the cognizance of any court of justice. We see him accusing himself twice of secret thoughts which he might have had hereafter. The whole world does not afford a single instance of a man tried and condemned for transitory ideas starting up in his mind, and never communicated to any one living. There is not a court of justice in Europe, where a man accusing himself of a criminal thought, would be minded; and it is said that God himself does not punish them, unless accompanied with a determination of the will. To these considerations, however natural, it may be answered that Alexis, by his concealing several of the accomplices of his elopement, had given his father a right to punish him. His pardon was annexed to a general confession; and this he did not make till it was too late. In fine, after such a procedure, it did not seem possible, according to human nature, that Alexis would ever pardon a brother for whose sake he had been disinherited; and it was said—'*Better a delinquent be punished, than a whole empire endangered.*' The rigour of justice also corresponded with reasons of state."\*

The tribunal summoned by the stern He stood alone against the prejudices, the ancient customs, and the superstitions of his subjects. Had he observed a strict system of morals in legislation, and in his heroic resistance to the popular will; or, rather, had he not constantly sacrificed minor considerations of that nature in his efforts to accomplish the great objects to which he dedicated his life, he certainly never would have succeeded in reclaiming Russia from the state of barbarism in which he found her, and linking her in spirit, in knowledge, and by national treaties, to the states of Europe. With reference, however, to the case of the unfortunate Prince Alexis, the historian is spared the painful task of analysing the mere legal propriety of the proceedings adopted by the czar; for, by the law of Russia, the sovereign, in common with all parents, possessed the dangerous, but incontestable, right of life or death of his son. Peter, therefore, did not infringe the law of the country. He calmly availed



father for the trial of his son for high treason, met on the 24th of June, 1718. The court presented a solemn spectacle. The criminal, wasted, haggard, and utterly subdued from mental excitement and imprisonment, was so changed that even his friends scarcely recognised in him the once wild and profligate czarévitch. On the other hand was the accuser, who, crushing in his bosom the emotions of parental feeling, stood there to arraign his son. The robust frame of the czar stooped slightly from the weight of years and care; but his stern face and eagle eye were stamped with the expression of judicial rigour. On the faces of the solemn and in part venerable auditory, sat looks of expectancy, pain, and pity.

After the preliminary proceedings of the court had been passed over, the czar commenced a narrative of the offences of his son; and having detailed them, he added that his own joy in the success of his arms and internal reforms, was overbalanced by the deep sorrow he experienced in consequence of the profligate conduct of the prince. He then continued in the following strain:—"Though by all laws, human and divine, and especially by those of Russia, which exclude all interposition of the civil power between father and son, even among private persons, we have a full and sufficient power of sentencing our son according to his crimes and our will, without consulting the opinions of any persons whatsoever; yet, as men are not so clear-sighted in their own affairs as in those of others, and as the most skilful and experienced physicians trust not to their own judgment concerning themselves; so, fearing lest I should bring some sin on my conscience, I state my case to you, and require a remedy. For if, ignorant of the nature of my distemper, I should go about to cure it by my own ability, the consequence may be eternal death; seeing that I have sworn on the judgments of God, and have in writing promised my son his pardon, provided he tells me the truth; and afterwards confirmed that promise with my mouth. Though he has broke his promise, yet, that I may not in anything depart from my obligations, I desire you to con-

sider this affair with the greatest attention, to see what he has deserved. Do not flatter me, or fear that, should he deserve only a slight punishment, and you deliver your opinion accordingly, you will offend me; for I swear to you by the great God, and by his judgments, that you have nothing at all to apprehend. Let it not give you uneasiness that you are to try your sovereign's son; but do justice without any respect of persons, and destroy not both your souls and mine. Lastly, let not our conscience have anything to reproach us with on the terrible day of judgment, and let not our country be hurt."

The czar having delivered this address to the judges, transmitted another to the clergy, which concluded with these observations:—"Though this case does not come within the spiritual, but rather the civil, jurisdiction, and we have this day brought it before the secular court; yet, recollecting that passage in the Word of God which requires us to consult the heads and elders of the church, that we may be informed in the will of Heaven, and being anxious of receiving all possible instruction on so important an occasion, we desire of you, the bishops and the whole ecclesiastical power, as propounders of the Word of God, not to pronounce any judgment in this case, but to examine it, and give us your opinions according to the sacred oracles, from which we may be best instructed as to the punishment our son deserves; which opinions you will deliver to us in writing under your hands, so that, being rightly informed therein, we may not lay any burden upon our conscience. We therefore repose implicit confidence in you, that, as guardians of the divine laws, as faithful pastors of the Christian flock, and as promoters of your country's good, you will act with dignity suited to your station; and we conjure you, by that dignity and the holiness of the functions you discharge, to proceed without fear or dissimulation."

The clergy delivered their response to this solemn appeal on the 1st of July. After a preamble, stating that the case did not come within the scope of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, followed several texts from

himself of the fatal jurisdiction which was reposed in his hands. Posterity will not accuse the monarch of having strained any legal principle, or of having prevented any legal right, to achieve his purpose; but it will unhesitatingly condemn the father for having resorted to a prerogative which he was not

enforced to employ, and which it would have well become him to have relinquished. He was superior to his age, but of a severe temper, and not always magnanimous in the exercise of those powers with which he was invested by nature and by his position."



Scripture, having reference both to the execution of justice and the beauty of mercy. They, however, drew particular attention to the passage in Leviticus, in which it is said, that whoever curseth his father or mother shall be put to death; and to a verse in the gospel of St. Matthew, which gives the sanction of Christianity to this rigid Judaical law. After these and similar citations, the document concluded with these remarkable words:—"If his majesty is inclined to punish the delinquent according to his actions and the measure of his guilt, he has before him examples from the Old Testament. If he be inclined to show mercy, he has the pattern of Christ himself, kindly receiving the penitent prodigal; dismissing the woman taken in adultery, who, by the law, was to be stoned; and delighting in mercy more than in sacrifice. He has likewise the example of David, who was solicitous for the safety of his son Absalom, although he had rebelled against him; who recommended him to the commanders of his army when they went forth to give him battle, saying, 'Spare my son Absalom!' The father was for showing mercy; but divine justice did not spare the offender. The czar's heart is in the hands of God; let him choose that to which God shall incline him."

The merciful tendency of this answer has drawn down considerable admiration upon the body from whom it emanated. Even Voltaire has a sentence of generous commendation upon them in consequence. Our judgment, however, rather coincides with that of another writer, who arrives at a very different conclusion with regard to the merit to be attributed to the clergy in this matter. "If," says he, "they had been sincerely disposed to impress upon the mind of the czar a merciful construction of the case, and if they had been sufficiently courageous to have tendered such an opinion unreservedly, it is quite clear that their answer would have been very differently prepared. The fact seems to be, that they were afraid of committing themselves to one side or the other; and that in order to escape all responsibility, they placed a sufficient number of examples, bearing both ways, before the czar, so that whatever course his majesty might ultimately pursue, should be justified by satisfactory precedents. The reforms that Peter had effected in the church had already rendered the clergy subservient to his will.

They felt that they were no longer an independent body. Their arrogance, which formerly had kept the throne in awe, was now sunk into servility; and it is therefore not surprising, that, thus called upon to give an opinion on a question respecting which it is scarcely assuming too much to say that the czar's mind was already made up, or had, at all events, exhibited so strong a feeling against the prince as to warrant them in believing that he desired to punish and not to spare his son—it is not surprising that they should have submitted so equivocal a statement to his majesty. But it is a source of no slight surprise, that any commentators on this event should have traced to the Christian benevolence of those ecclesiastics a document which was dictated by their fears."

On the day in which the clergy delivered their opinion to the czar, the Prince Alexis was examined for the last time. He then signed a written confession, in which he acknowledged himself to have been a bigot in his youth, to have kept the company of monks and priests, and drunk intemperately with them; to have received from them those impressions which first alienated him from the duties of his condition, and even created in him a hatred of his father's person. He further admitted, that he would have used any means whatever to have secured the succession.

Several days elapsed; and then, on the 5th of July, the ministers, senators, military and civil officers, whom the czar had constituted the judges of his son, delivered their judgment. The document stated, that having put the case to the vote, they unanimously, and without any contradiction, agreed and resolved that the czarevitch, Alexis, *deserves death* for his many capital crimes and offences against his sovereign and father. After an enumeration of these, the document concluded:—"It is with grieved hearts and eyes full of tears, that we, being servants and subjects, pronounce this sentence, seeing that, as such, it does not belong to us to take cognizance of so momentous a concern; and especially to pronounce a sentence against the son of our sovereign and most bountiful lord, the czar. However, it being his will that we should pass our judgment, we by these presents declare our real opinion, and we pronounce this condemnation with a clear and Christian conscience, as we shall answer for it before the just and impartial tribunal of



God. Submitting, withal, this sentence and condemnation to the supreme power, will, and merciful revision of his czarish majesty and most gracious sovereign." This sentence is open to the same censure as the opinion of the clergy; it was not impartial. The servile senators understood the wishes of the czar, and they obeyed them. They would willingly have spared the prince, but they had a still stronger desire to please the czar.

Sentence was pronounced on the 6th; and on hearing it, the wretched Alexis was seized with convulsions, and carried in a state of insensibility from the court. The next morning, the czar received word that his son was dangerously ill, and implored to see him. Peter, attended by the principal officers of his court, immediately went to visit the miserable prince. During this tragic interview, both father and son shed tears. The condemned prince then asked his father's pardon, which the latter gave him. The czar took his leave; but in the evening a second message was sent, informing him that the prince was in mortal extremity; but before the father could arrive at the bedside of his son, Alexis was no more.

There is nothing in these circumstances inconsistent with the supposition that the prince died a natural death; but suspicions to the contrary prevailed throughout Europe; and the czar has been charged with the shocking crime of murdering his own son! This charge has never been conclusively refuted, nor definitely established, as we think it must have been, had it been true. Most historians have written on the subject with a palpable bias against the czar, and an evident desire to believe him guilty of so great a crime. The wildest, most improbable, and revolting stories were circulated at the time, and Peter was said to have personally put his son to death in many different ways. According to one of them, the czar first knouted, and then beheaded the prince with his own hands; and the head was so carefully sewed on to the body again by a lady of the court, that although the corpse lay in state during four days, the mode of death was never detected!

Another narrative, though scarcely less improbable, is entitled to more consideration, because it is related on the authority of a person who was in the service of the czar, and, moreover, himself an actor in the

incident he describes. Captain Bruce, a military officer in the service of Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain, after alluding, in his *Memoirs*, to the trial of Prince Alexis, thus continues:—"The trial was begun on the 25th of June, and continued to the 6th of July, when the supreme court, with unanimous consent, passed sentence of death upon the prince, but left the manner of it to his majesty's determination. The prince was brought before the court, his sentence read to him, and he was reconveyed to his prison in the fortress. On the next day his majesty, attended by all the senators and bishops, with several others of high rank, went to the fort, and entered the apartment where the czarevitch was kept prisoner. Some little time thereafter, Marshal Weyde came out, and ordered me to go to Mr. Bear's, the druggist, whose shop was hard by, and tell him to make the *potion strong* which he had bespoke, as the prince was then very ill. When I delivered this message to Mr. Bear, he turned quite pale, and fell a shaking and trembling, and appeared in the utmost confusion, which surprised me so much, that I asked him what was the matter with him; but he was unable to return me any answer. In the meantime the marshal himself came in, much in the same condition with the druggist, saying, he ought to have been more expeditious, as the prince was very ill of an apoplectic fit. Upon this the druggist delivered him a silver cup with a cover, which the marshal himself carried into the prince's apartments, staggering all the way he went like one drunk. About half-an-hour after, the czar with all his attendants withdrew, with very dismal countenances: and when they went, the marshal ordered me to attend at the prince's apartment; and in case of any alteration, to inform him immediately thereof. There were at that time two physicians and two surgeons in waiting, with whom and the officers on guard I dined on what had been dressed for the prince's dinner. The physicians were called in immediately after to attend the prince, who was struggling out of one convulsion into another; and, after great agonies, expired at five o'clock in the afternoon. I went directly to inform the marshal, and he went that moment to acquaint his majesty, who ordered the corpse to be embowelled; after which it was laid in a coffin covered with black velvet, and a pall of rich gold tissue spread over it; it was then carried



out of the fort to the church of the Holy Trinity, where the corpse lay in state till the 11th in the evening, when it was carried back to the fort, and deposited in the royal burial vault, next the coffin of the princess, his late consort; on which occasion, the czar and czaritz, and the chief of the nobility, followed in procession. Various were the reports that were spread concerning his death. It was given out publicly, that on hearing the sentence of death pronounced, the dread thereof threw him into an apopleptic fit, of which he died. Very few believed he died a natural death; but it was dangerous for people to speak as they thought. The ministers of the emperor and the states of Holland were forbid the court for speaking their minds too freely on this occasion; and upon complaint against them, both were recalled.”\*

This strange, and to us incredible narrative, is adopted by Leclerc, a French writer, who was then at St. Petersburg, but who is admitted to be careless in the selection of his facts. Had the czar resolved to poison his son, would he have disclosed his design to so many persons as this account states he did, some one of whom would have been certain, after the death of Peter, to have revealed the secret? It is scarcely less than ridiculous, to suppose that the czar should have sent a marshal of the empire to the shop of a neighbouring druggist for a draught of poison for the prince! A man of honour would scarcely have performed an office fit only for a hangman; nor would two persons have been sent to the druggist's

\* Captain Bruce adds the following passage elucidatory of the character of the prince. Though entitled to no further confidence than the extract above, it is certainly far more probable:—“Thus died Prince Alexis, undoubted heir to that great monarchy; little regretted by people of rank, as he always shunned their acquaintance and company. It was said, the czar had taken uncommon pains in the education of this prince, but all in vain; indolent and slovenly by nature, he kept the lowest of company, with whom he indulged himself in all manner of vice and debauchery. His father, to put a stop to this, sent him abroad to see foreign courts, thinking thereby to reclaim him, but all to no purpose; on which he ordered him to attend him in all his expeditions, thereby to keep a watchful eye over him himself; but the prince evaded this by continually pretending to be sick, which might probably be the case, as he was most part of his time drunk. The czar, at last, thought to reclaim him by marrying him to some foreign princess; what effect that had has been already mentioned. After the death of his amiable princess, his majesty ordered him to attend him in his expedition to Germany; and being on his journey, under pretence of going to join him in Mecklenburg, he

for the poison, when one was sufficient. Again, it is extremely improbable that the four physicians and surgeons attending at the bedside of the prince would, unless they also were accomplices in the murder, have permitted an unknown potion to be given to their patient; and quite impossible that they would not have detected the symptoms of poisoning. The only object to be gained by the czar, if he had deprived his son of life, was to avoid the odium which might attach to him on account of his want of parental emotion. Peter was not a man to care much for the opinions of others; but had this been the case, his object was only to be gained by the prince appearing to die a natural death, and the fact of violence being kept a profound secret. Yet, according to this account, the czar had not only a number of unnecessary accomplices, but the murder was committed almost in public. If Peter had, indeed, resolved upon violently terminating the life of his son, it would have been more political to have left him to the axe of the executioner, than to have committed a crime which could scarcely have escaped detection, and must for ever have left the name of its author exposed to the abhorrence of mankind. The objection, that the pride of the czar would have prevented him from sending his unworthy son to the scaffold, has not, to our mind, the weight which has sometimes been attributed to it. Peter would not have felt disgraced by having his name for ever associated with that of the heroic and unbending Brutus.

The czar acted openly in the matter; and, fled privately, and sought the protection of his brother-in-law, the emperor of Germany, whom he endeavoured to engage in a war against his father. It was made appear on his trial, that he threatened, whenever he came to the throne, to overturn all his father had done, declaring, that he would be revenged on Prince Mentschikoff and his sister-in-law, by impaling them alive, as also the great chancellor, Count Galatkin, and his son, for persuading him to marry the Princess Wolfenbutter; that he would send all his father's favourites into banishment, and expel all foreigners out of the country; that he would release his mother from confinement, and put dame Catherine and her children in her place; after this he would form his court of people who had the ancient manners and customs of Russia most at heart, for he hated all innovations. Nothing could have touched the czar more sensibly than threatening to overthrow all he had been doing for so many years for the welfare and glory of his country, with so much danger, toil, and labour, without ever sparing his own person; which made him say with great emotion, that he would rather give his dominions to a worthy stranger, than be succeeded by so worthless a son.”



with a view to correct any misrepresentation of his conduct, caused a report of the whole trial to be printed, and copies sent to the various courts of Europe. It was accompanied by a letter from the czar, stating the reasons which had induced him to bring his son to trial, and giving the following account of the last moments of the prince:—"While," said Peter, "we were debating between the natural feelings of paternal clemency and the duties we owed to the security of our kingdom; and while we were pondering on what resolution we ought to take in an affair of such difficulty and importance, it pleased the Almighty God, by his especial will and his just judgment, and by his mercy, to deliver us out of that embarrassment, and to save our family and kingdom from the shame and the dangers, by abridging, yesterday, the life of our said son Alexis, after an illness with which he was seized as soon as he heard the sentence of death pronounced against him. That illness appeared at first like an apoplexy; but he afterwards recovered his senses, and received the holy sacrament as a Christian; and having desired to see us, we went to him immediately, with all our councillors and senators; and then he acknowledged and sincerely confessed all his said faults and crimes committed against us, with tears, and all the marks of a true penitent; and begged our pardon, which, according to Christian and paternal duty, we granted him. After which, on the 7th of July, at six in the evening, he surrendered his soul to God." This account was received throughout Europe as a satisfactory explanation of the sudden death of the prince; and it is certainly far more probable than the one given by Captain Bruce, or the rumours that the unfortunate Alexis was beheaded either by his own father or by Marshal Weyde. An accusation has even been brought against the amiable Catherine, that she urged on Peter to destroy Alexis, in order that her own son might succeed to the throne. Lamberti, the writer who relates this, also infers that Catherine poisoned her husband Peter—a supposition notoriously in opposition to the known facts. Voltaire, who must have been well-informed upon this point, remarks—"No foreign minister,

residing at the Russian court, has ever accused, or so much as suspected, Catherine of having taken the least step against a son-in-law from whom she had everything to fear. If it is not said that she interceded for his pardon, all the memoirs of that time, especially those of Count Bassewitz, agree, that she pitied his misfortunes. I have before me the memoirs of a public minister, in which I find these very words:—"I was present when the czar said to the Duke of Holstein, that Catherine had entreated him to hinder sentence being pronounced against the czarevitch; only, said she, compel him to become a monk; as the disgrace of a sentence of death will reflect on your grandson."

Had the czar acted with perfect good faith to his unworthy and unfortunate son, we should have said that his conduct, though stern, was unimpeachable. To lose the father in the patriot, is an act of nobleness. But patriotism should be pure in its integrity, and perfectly free from reproach. Peter violated a solemn promise of pardon when he arrested his son; and the reasons he assigned for placing him upon his trial were strained and insufficient. Whether Peter, after the condemnation of Alexis, anticipated the office of the executioner by the administration of poison, must perhaps for ever remain a mystery. For reasons already assigned, we are inclined to believe that such was not the case; though it must be admitted that the well-known ferocity of the czar's character gives an air of remote probability to the inference that he was guilty of procuring the murder of his son. But many writers have acted on this subject in a manner as illogical as it is unjust. They first argue that it is highly probable the czar caused poison to be administered to his son; then assume that he actually did so; and conclude by heaping on the memory of Peter that invective which he would deserve if guilty. Even Count Ségur, who adopts this course, and luxuriates in a storm of dramatic eloquence, based on so unjust a ground, observes—"But it must be owned that the blood which was shed was not shed in vain: the last hope of barbarism was destroyed, and the regeneration of the Russians was secured."



## CHAPTER XXV.

DOMESTIC REFORMS; DEATH OF CHARLES XII.; RUSSIA HARASSES SWEDEN; IMPOTENT INTERFERENCE OF ENGLAND; SUCCESSFUL MEDIATION OF FRANCE; CONGRESS OF NEUSTADT, AND PEACE WITH SWEDEN; GREAT REJOICINGS IN RUSSIA; CLIMAX OF THE GLORY OF PETER; THE SENATE BESTOW UPON HIM THE TITLES OF GREAT, EMPEROR, AND FATHER; PETER PUNISHES PUBLIC OFFICERS WHO HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF CORRUPTION; FINAL ABOLITION OF THE PATRIARCHATE; THE CZAR COMPELS THE MONKS AND NUNS TO ADOPT SOME USEFUL OCCUPATION; THE CZAR'S EXPEDITION TO PERSIA; EXTENSION OF THE RUSSIAN FRONTIER IN THAT DIRECTION; CORONATION OF THE EMPRESS; STRANGE CHARGE CONCERNING HER; LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH OF PETER; HIS CHARACTER AND PRESUMED POLICY.

THE gloomy year (1718) which witnessed the trial and death of Prince Alexis, was yet distinguished by the number and extent of the improvements the czar effected in Russia. His mind was not engrossed by the trouble which his son's misconduct had brought upon him; for he had in truth become the father of the empire; all the inhabitants of which he regarded as his family. The punishments he inflicted he considered as sacrifices which a stern necessity obliged him to offer up for the welfare of the state.

Thus, in a year which was certainly one of sadness and suffering, the czar appointed a general police throughout the empire, under control of an office at St. Petersburg. Luxury in apparel and games of chance were prohibited; the streets cleared of the swarms of beggars who used to infest them; and schools, almshouses, and hospitals built and endowed. At St. Petersburg the wealthy were compelled to erect houses of a regular construction, the materials for which the czar caused to be brought there free of cost by such vessels and other conveyances as were returning empty from the neighbouring localities. In this favourite city the streets were paved and lighted with lamps in imitation of those established at Paris by Louis XIV. Regulations were made for preserving order and cleanliness in the streets, and for the speedy extinction of fires. Weights and measures were fixed and rendered uniform, and an erroneous attempt was made to benefit the poor by fixing the price of provisions.

Peter gave much attention to the promotion of trade and manufactures; improving many of the latter, and creating new ones. He went in person to give directions to the managers of corn, powder, and saw-mills; rope-yards, sail-cloth, and linen manufactories, brick-kilns, and slate quarries. He instituted a commercial court of justice, or board of trade, of which, that no injustice

might be done to strangers, one-half were natives, and the other foreigners. The czar encouraged the production of cloths and woollen stuffs by liberal bounties, in consequence of which Moscow came to make linen equal to that of Holland; while at St. Petersburg, the silk of Persia was manufactured as finely as at Ispahan. He caused the mines to be worked with increased energy, built the city of Ladoga, and connected the great lake of that name with the Neva, by means of canals and sluices. At the making of this and another canal in the same locality, the czar frequently laboured with his own hands. He measured the ground, and then mingling with the labourers, threw up the earth into a barrow, and wheeled it away himself. This example was occasionally followed by his courtiers; and thus labour was dignified, and the workmen stimulated to increased exertion. At the same time he commissioned a body of engineers to prepare correct maps of the whole empire, for the convenience of Russians, and the information of the rest of Europe.

The conspiracy which had been originated by the adventurer, Baron Goertz, had not been abandoned. Latterly, the slight hostilities the czar had undertaken against Sweden, had been less with a view of injuring her than from a desire of compelling her to purchase peace by the cession of the provinces he had conquered. A congress for the promotion of peace even took place; and there is every reason to suppose that its conclusion would have been followed by an alliance between Peter and Charles, who, in conjunction with Cardinal Alberoni, intended then to address themselves to carry out certain schemes which, in the event of their being successful, would have revolutionised the face of Europe. We have mentioned that a part of this conspiracy was the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne of England. But Charles was not permitted



to light up the flames of war in this country. On the evening of the 11th of December of this eventful year (1718), he was killed before the town of Frederickshall, in Norway. A ball struck him on the right temple, passed through his head, and, in an instant, he was a disfigured corpse. Thus perished this "heroic madman," in his thirty-seventh year; who must, to quote the language of his celebrated biographer, be considered "rather an extraordinary than a great man, and more worthy to be admired than imitated." Suspicions were very generally entertained at the time, that Charles was shot by one of his own officers, and not by the enemy. Voltaire discredits them, and says that the shot which struck Charles was much too large to have entered a pistol, which must have been the instrument used if the king was really assassinated. Other writers take a different view of the matter; and Dr. Clarke, the celebrated traveller, who spared no trouble to ascertain the facts of the case, observed—"That he (Charles) was really assassinated, seems so clear, that it is marvellous any doubt should be entertained as to the fact; and yet, with a view to ascertain the truth as to the manner of his death, every succeeding sovereign has thought it right to open his sepulchre and inspect his embalmed remains."\*

It is said, that when the czar heard of the death of his former rival, he shed tears, and exclaimed—"My dear Charles, how much I lament you!" If this grief was really sincere, it found few to share it. Sweden was glad to be rid of a man whose restless excitement had brought her to the verge of ruin. The senate insulted his memory by seizing and beheading the crafty Baron Goertz, to whom they attributed many of the ill-deeds of Charles. The conspiracy for remodelling Europe in the interests of despots was thus blown to the winds, and the contemplated alliance between Russia and Sweden abandoned. Though Ulrica Eleonora (the sister of Charles, and new sovereign of Sweden) sought to heal the wounds of her country by the repose of peace, yet, instead of becoming the ally of Russia, she entered into friendly

negotiations with England, which was only not openly hostile to the czar.

Sweden sought for peace, and was ready to make considerable sacrifices to obtain it. Prussia and Denmark she disarmed by large concessions, and she purchased from George I. the protective presence of an English fleet in the Baltic. But Russia was the giant foe of Sweden; and the terms on which the czar was willing to grant peace were extravagantly large. As Sweden hesitated, Peter put a fleet to sea, and threatened the coasts of that country. His vessels even engaged a Swedish squadron, captured a ship and two frigates, and drove the rest into port.

At this period (1719) the English fleet which George I. had promised for the protection of Sweden, made its appearance in the Baltic. Peter, who was serving with his own ships as vice-admiral, sent a message to Admiral Norris, who commanded the English fleet, desiring to know whether he came only as a friend to Sweden or as an enemy to Russia. Norris answered, that as yet he had no positive orders. This answer, which might be interpreted as a threat, rather incensed than intimidated Peter. When, therefore, the English admiral shortly afterwards sailed for Copenhagen, the Russian vessels made some descents on the Swedish coast, even in the very neighbourhood of Stockholm, destroyed hundreds of villages and castles, together with all the copper and iron-works, and spread desolation in every direction. The neighbourhood of the English fleet proved worse than useless. Admiral Norris, unauthorised to resent the outrages of the Russians, was compelled to let the English flag bear part of the disgrace thus heaped upon Sweden. The czar showed his contempt of this impotent interference, by capturing and carrying off four Swedish frigates, almost in sight of the English fleet. We were said to have done too much, if only mediators; and too little, if enemies.

The severe inflictions which the Swedes suffered at the hands of the Russians, made them solicit a suspension of arms, for the purpose of concluding a peace. As English

\* "The character of this extraordinary man requires no further illustration. We shall merely observe, that whatever the admiration excited by his earlier military successes and his indomitable courage, he was really a madman: that, as the cause of his country's ruin (for, since his day, it has never been more than a fourth-rate state in European affairs),

he deserves the execration, not the applause, of mankind. If he was really assassinated, we cannot, indeed, praise the deed or the doer, since both must be held in everlasting odium; but we may observe, that no deed could have been so useful to Sweden, or even to Europe."—*Dunham's History of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway.*



interference had failed, Sweden now sought the mediation of France, and the Duke of Orleans (the regent) succeeded in bringing about the long-negotiated reconciliation. Accordingly, a congress was held at Neustadt, a small town in Finland, where the czar had an army ready to overrun the country in the event of the terms he dictated being rejected. Sweden was in no condition to dispute with him, and nothing was left to her but to consent to his proposals. The peace of Neustadt was finally signed on the 10th of September, 1721, and by it Peter retained possession of all the provinces he had conquered, from Courland to the extremity of the Gulf of Iceland, and from thence through Kexholm and a narrow slip of Finland; leaving him undisputed master of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, Carelia, Wybourg, and the neighbouring isles; the whole occupying a space of about 300 leagues in unequal breadths, and equal in extent to a large kingdom. Great was the satisfaction of the czar; and he wrote to his plenipotentiaries—"You have drawn up the treaty as if we had done it ourselves and sent it to you to cause it to be signed by the Swedes. This glorious event will be ever present to our memory."

Peace, though not necessary to Russia, was highly welcome both to the people and the sovereign. The former were delighted at the prospect of a relief, after twenty years of incessant struggle and warfare. The latter, now relieved from the necessity of maintaining large armies on the borders of Sweden, and at peace with those other nations from whom he had any reason to apprehend hostilities, hailed with gratification that leisure which enabled him to devote himself entirely to the reformation of his empire, which, even amidst the occupations of war, he had cultivated with such restless solicitude.

This peace was regarded by the subjects of the czar as the most glorious of his triumphs, and it was celebrated by public festivities, which, for their splendour and the enthusiasm with which they were received by the people, surpassed anything of the kind that had previously taken place in Russia. Peter, touched by the joy and gratitude of the people, granted a remission of all taxes due to the royal treasury, and a pardon to all prisoners, except those confined for robbery, murder, and high treason. Always the teacher of his subjects, he also exhibited to them the little sailing-vessel which, in his

young days, had suggested to him the idea of building a navy. This was a striking lesson on the results of industry and perseverance. The czar had preserved this little boat with affectionate care, and he would sometimes amuse himself with decorating it and arming its miniature decks with silver cannon. This period, indeed, must be regarded as the climax of the glory of this extraordinary man. The peace festivities were prolonged during a period of fifteen days, and the senate took advantage of the general happiness of the people to confer on Peter the honourable titles of Great, Emperor, and Father of his country. The chancellor addressed him in the cathedral, in the name of all the orders of the state, after which the assembled senators thrice shouted, "Long live our emperor and our father"—shouts which were taken up and heartily re-echoed by the people without. The same day the foreign ministers at St. Petersburg congratulated the czar on these honours, and addressed him by his new title of emperor, which was recognised by all the courts of Europe, except that of Poland and the pope; the former being convulsed with factions, and the latter sunk into an insignificance which rendered its suffrage of very little importance. When the rejoicings at St. Petersburg were over, they were renewed at Moscow, into which the czar made a triumphal entry under decorated arches.

Yet, during this visit to Moscow, Peter appointed a military commission to inquire into the truth of certain complaints which had been made against those entrusted with the administration of affairs during his absence. Prince Gagarin, governor of Siberia, was found guilty of having robbed his majesty's caravan from China, and of murdering the persons by whom it was conducted, by which and other crimes he had acquired enormous wealth. Prince Mentschikoff, (now the first subject of the empire), Prince Volkonski (governor of Archangel), Admiral Count Apraxin, and General Bruce, were also convicted of peculation. Gagarin was hanged, like Haman, on a gallows fifty cubits high, and Volkonski was shot; the rest were let off with pecuniary fines and castigation from the czar with his walking-stick, which he never failed to use very freely over the shoulders of any one he was displeased with. As to Prince Mentschikoff, he had so often been detected in peculation, that the czar had come to regard him as an incorrigible rogue, with whom, nevertheless,



he did not wish to part. On one occasion the senate, who possessed many proofs of his depredations, drew up a tabular statement of them, and placed it on the table opposite the czar's seat. Peter glanced at the paper, and, discerning its contents, seemed to pay no further attention to them. There it remained, day after day, in the same conspicuous place; until at length Count Tolstoi, who was sitting in the senate beside the czar, ventured to ask him what he thought of that document. "Nothing," replied Peter, "but that Mentschikoff will be always Mentschikoff."

The year which brought peace to Sweden, and gave repose to Russia (1721), witnessed also the consummation of Peter's reforms in the church. Though many years had elapsed since the death of the last patriarch, the czar had found means to evade appointing a successor. "He was," he said, "greatly occupied by business; and therefore, for the present, he desired the metropolitan of Rezan to take upon himself the ecclesiastical affairs of the empire." In the years 1718 and '19 the czar caused a perpetual synod, composed of members always to be nominated by the sovereign, to be erected for the direction of the church. It was to inquire into and decide all matters connected with religion; but its decisions were to be referred to the czar for confirmation; who became, in effect, supreme head of the church. He thus explained his motives for the establishment of this institution, which, with some alterations, exists even at this day. "Under the administration of a synod of priests, none of those disturbances and indiscretions are to be feared which might happen under the government of one sole ecclesiastical chief; that the people, seeing on one side a head of the state, and on the other a head of the church, might, from the superstition natural to them, come to imagine that there are in reality two supreme powers." In illustration of this important point, Peter cited instances of long dissensions between the crown and the priesthood, which every reader of history well knows have ever been a prolific source of bloodshed and misery. He further stated, "That the notion of two distinct powers, founded on the allegory of two swords, which the apostles happened to have in their possession, was absurd and extravagant."

For theology, as a separate branch of learning, Peter had but little respect; and though, in a general sense, a believer in the

sacred character of the inspired writings, yet, in practice, he seems only to have regarded the precepts of morality and those of natural religion. On one occasion, the synod represented to the czar, to whom they should have brought a person whom they recommended to his notice as a bishop, that as yet they knew of none but illiterate men. "Well," answered Peter, "it is but choosing the man of the best life; and he will do full as well as the most learned scholar." Yet Peter respected revealed religion; and, despite the well-known tolerance of his character, exclaimed, one day—"The irreligious cannot be tolerated, because, by sapping religion, they turn into ridicule the sacredness of an oath, which is the foundation of all society."

The year 1721 witnessed, we said, the consummation of the czar's reforms in the church. On presiding at a meeting of the synod, some of the superior clergy presented to him a petition, praying him to appoint a patriarch. The hour had now arrived for a conclusive expression of opinion. Rising suddenly from his seat, Peter drew his sword, and, striking the table violently with it, while with the other hand he smote his breast, exclaimed vehemently—"Here is your patriarch!" Then casting a stern glance on his startled listeners, he hastily quitted the room. None of the clergy considered it prudent, subsequently, to renew the subject; and from that time the office of patriarch was no more.

Russia swarmed with monks and nuns, who were for the most part very idle and ignorant persons, and often no better than they should have been in many other respects. On the 31st of January, 1724, Peter issued an ordinance with respect to them, which had been drawn up by himself, in conjunction with an enlightened dignitary of the church. Its object was to discourage people from becoming idle dreamers in monasteries, in a country where the thinness of the population was such, that no man could be well spared from the labour of improving the land. Notwithstanding the gross ignorance of the monks, many of them could write—an accomplishment of which, in the early part of Peter's reign, they had made but a mischievous use. This was to slander the sovereign who was labouring so zealously for the good of his country. One priest even proceeded so far as to publish that Peter was antichrist, because he would have no patriarch. Upon this, another priest of a



more courtly nature, printed a reply, in which he contended that it was impossible for the czar to be antichrist, because the number 666 was not to be found in his name, and he had not the mark of the beast. Peter at once showed that mischievous theological speculations concerning him, intended to foster conspiracy, or whet the knife of the assassin, were not to be perpetrated with impunity. He put the slanderous priest to death, and rewarded with a bishopric the one who refuted him. This was in an early part of the czar's reign: he had, since that time, inspired the discontented among the priests with so much awe, that they had at least ceased to revile him openly. Latterly they had confined their efforts to poisoning the mind of his son—a circumstance which brought disgrace and death upon the prince, and a terrible retribution upon themselves. It is strange that ignorance and superstition will not learn that the civilisation which ameliorates the condition, and elevates the nature of mankind, is not to be hurled back by human might, and that they who oppose its progress are crushed beneath its iron tread.

Peter was himself the most industrious man in the Russian empire, and he regarded it as an outrage both upon morals and common sense, that a multitude of young men and women should make a vow to live a life of uselessness, and to become a public burden. Impressed with this feeling, he at first decreed that no person should enter upon a monastic life until he had attained the age of fifty; at which period the habits of life are so thoroughly formed, that it is probable very few would desire to make so great a change. At the representation of the clergy, however, the monastic age was reduced to thirty, before which no person was permitted to devote themselves to a life of religious seclusion and veiled pauperism. Military men, and occupiers of land, were prohibited from adopting the life of the cloister at any period, without an express permission from the emperor or the synod. The same rule applied to any person in the service of the state. The monks, who had hitherto passed their time chiefly in day-dreams and gluttony, were each of them compelled to work at some trade, or to employ themselves in attending to the sick poor, or the disbanded and disabled soldiers who were distributed amongst the monasteries. The life of the monks being thus made one of labour, and stripped of that

respect which might previously have dignified it, many of these persons turned from it in disgust, and sought occupations in which they could render themselves more useful to society. As to the nuns, such of them as had not long passed the meridian of life, were exhorted to marry. Those who declined, or were unable to do so, were all set to perform work suitable to their sex. Some were taught to make laces, by work-women brought from Brabant and Holland for that purpose; others to labour in the convent grounds, or tend upon the sick, or keep schools for the instruction of the children of the poor. Certain monasteries were also assigned for the admittance and education of orphans of each sex. Unhappily, the life of Peter was not sufficiently prolonged to render these improvements permanent.

The czar was naturally proud of his power over a body of men whose influence has usually ruined all monarchs who endeavoured to reform the abuses existing amongst them. On one occasion, a paper from the well-known English periodical, *The Spectator*, the subject of which was a parallel between Peter and Louis XIV., being read to him, the czar observed—"I cannot think that I deserve the preference given to me above that monarch; but it has been my happiness to go beyond him on one point, and that an essential one. I have brought my clergy to be submissive and quiet, and Louis XIV. suffered his to get the better of him."

Peter never lost his relish for the coarse pleasures which had been the occupation of his early youth. Even at this grave period, when the tragic fate of his son could not have been effaced from his memory, and his time was chiefly occupied in ecclesiastical reforms, he yet amused himself and the people with a vulgar revel, of a nature so strange, that it is wonderful how such a mind as his could possibly be diverted by it. We must, however, regard the most illustrious men as a compound of strength and weakness, and none the more separated from the wants and propensities of the meanest of men on account of their own mental power in some other direction. Shortly after the extinction of the patriarchate, the czar caused Buturlin, the second mock pope of his creation, to be married to the widow of his predecessor Jotoff. The bridegroom was in his eighty-fifth year, and the bride much about the same mature age. The messengers who



carried the invitations to the ceremony were four stutterers. Four decrepid old men attended the bride, and the running footmen were four of the most corpulent fellows that could be found. The orchestra was placed on a waggon drawn by bears, who being goaded with iron spikes, their hideous roarings formed a bass suitable to the tunes played in the waggons. As to the nuptial benediction, that was bestowed by a blind and deaf priest, with spectacles on. The procession, the wedding feast, the ceremony of undressing the bride and bridegroom, and putting them to bed, were all in accordance with the rest of this strange buffoonery. The czar and his courtiers, who followed in the marriage procession, and witnessed the subsequent fooleries, seemed to enjoy them with immense gusto.

Peter's last great public act was an expedition to Persia, which empire was then falling to pieces under the feeble rule of the imbecile Hussein Shah. The throne of the sovereign was almost wrested from him by a usurper, while the empire was invaded on one side by the Affghans, and on the other by the Lesghians, who resided in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus. The latter nation poured into the province of Shirvan, sacked the city of Shamaki, and put the inhabitants to the sword, including about 300 Russian traders, whose warehouses they also plundered of goods estimated at the value of 4,000,000 roubles. Peter was greatly irritated, for he had himself induced the Russian merchants to settle at Shamaki, where they were carrying on a very prosperous trade. He therefore demanded satisfaction for the outrage that had been inflicted. The Persian monarch was willing, but unable, to grant it; he therefore pleaded his helpless condition, and entreated the czar to aid in subduing the foes by whom he was surrounded.

To this Peter had no disinclination, for he had long entertained a project for making himself master of the Caspian Sea, with the object of directing the commerce of Persia and a portion of India through his own dominions. On the 15th of May, 1722, the czar, accompanied by Catherine, set sail with a considerable expedition. They proceeded down the broad Volga as far as the city of Astracan, where Peter paused to await the arrival of his forces and *matériel* of war. During this enforced leisure, he occupied himself in examining the works

for the extensive canals designed to join the Caspian, Baltic, and White seas. His troops arrived while he was contemplating these gigantic projects. The army consisted of 22,000 foot, 9,000 dragoons, 15,000 Cossacks, and 3,000 seamen. The project of the czar was full of difficulties; for he commanded that the horses should proceed over land, through deserts which are frequently without water; and beyond them they were to pass the mountains of the Caucasus, where 300 men might check the progress of a whole army. But to this movement the czar was encouraged by the distracted state of Persia, which rendered it almost helpless against aggression.

Sailing from Astracan, the expedition proceeded as far as the little fortified town of Andreof—a town founded by the Georgians. This was soon captured, and the Russians then advanced by land into the province of Daghestan, where Peter caused manifestos, in the Persian and Russian languages, to be circulated. This was to avoid giving offence to the Ottoman Porte, which, besides its subjects the Circassians and Georgians, had in these districts some considerable vassals, who had lately placed themselves under its protection. One of the principal of these was Mahmoud d'Ut-mich, who, assuming the title of sultan, had the imprudence to attack the Russians. He was utterly defeated; and, according to the account of the victors, "his country was made a bonfire." The intense heat was a source of great suffering to the Russian troops; but Peter exhibited the same attention to discipline, and disregard of personal fatigue and discomfort, which had characterised him in his earlier undertakings. He shared the toil of his army, and constantly either rode or walked by the side of his troops. At this time, his customary dress was a short dimity waistcoat and a white nightcap, with a plain flapped hat over it. He seems, however, to have thought this odd costume more easy than dignified; for he prepared himself to receive any deputation by putting on his regimentals.

The march of the Russians was protracted over the summer months, and in the middle of September they reached the city of Derbend—known by the Persians and Turks as Demir Capi, or Iron Gate, because it once had such a gate towards the south. The city was regarded as impregnable, for the upper part of it joins a steep branch of the



Caucasus, while its walls at the other side are washed by the sea, which in stormy weather breaks over them. Yet on the approach of the Russians, the governor voluntarily came forth to meet the czar, and presented him with the silver keys of the city and the castle, and invited him to enter. Peter took peaceable possession of the place, and encamped his troops within the walls on the sea-shore. Mahmoud the usurper, who had seized the crown of the shah, hastened with an army of Tartars to save Derbend from falling into the power of the Russians; but he was too late—it was already in their hands.

Though Peter had been triumphant thus far, he doubted of the ultimate success of an expedition which, on account of the many natural difficulties to be overcome, he began to perceive had been somewhat rashly undertaken. To provide for the wants of a large army, in its passage through vast sterile tracts and regions where not even a village varied the profound solitude of nature, was no common task. The czar understood the tremendous responsibility of a position where, perhaps, one false step was destruction. In this state of mind he received news that thirteen vessels, containing provisions, stores, horses, and recruits for his army, had been wrecked in their passage from Astracan. This heavy loss, combined with the fact that the season was then unfavourable for military operations, induced Peter to abandon the expedition. Retracing his steps, he returned to Moscow, which he re-entered on the 5th of January, 1723. He celebrated his return from this unprofitable campaign with a triumph, beneath the forced festivities of which he must have concealed the mortification he really felt.

The prizes of the world commonly fall to the strong; and even now, Peter derived advantage from the distracted state of Persia. The shah Hussein, and the usurper Mahmoud, struggled hard for supremacy. Hussein implored the support of the Russian emperor; while Mahmoud feared him as an avenger, who might wrest from him all the fruits of his rebellion. He therefore used every endeavour to excite the Ottoman Porte to hostilities against Peter, by statements concerning the devastations the latter had committed in Daghestan. The apprehensions of the sultan were aroused concerning the safety of Georgia, then a part of the Ottoman dominions; and he was on the point of declaring war against

Russia—a circumstance from which he was diverted by the interference of the courts of Vienna and Paris. In the meantime, the dethroned shah of Persia supplicated assistance both from Russia and Turkey; and with the blind selfishness of a despot, offered each of them one part of his dominions, if they would secure for him the remainder. Russia and Turkey, therefore, instead of commencing hostilities, entered upon a treaty with each other, and with the shah, by which it was arranged that Russia should take possession of the provinces of Ghilan, Astaraboth, and Mazandaran, the three principal provinces of the ancient kings of the Medes; while Turkey was to have Casbin, Tauris, and Erivan. Thus was the fine kingdom of Persia dismembered, through the weakness of its sovereign and the turbulence of its people. Peter thus extended his empire from the extremity of the Black Sea to the southern limits of the Caspian. "One single man," observes Voltaire, "by his active and resolute genius, raised his country; while in Persia, one single man, being weak and indolent, occasioned the fall of his."

Russia was again in a state of repose, and silently carrying into action the great reforms which its illustrious ruler had often made too abruptly for endurance, except under favourable circumstances. The empire had become a great power in Europe, and Peter was the undisputed arbiter of the north. He seems now to have desired that rest from toil and excitement which his long life of effort had deserved. Within the period of his reign he had compressed the events of a couple of centuries; and it was wise to rest upon his laurels, and watch the working of the new state of society he had created.

It was now that Peter resolved to bestow upon the partner of his anxieties that illustrious reward which he derived as much honour from bestowing as Catherine did in accepting. In the spring of 1724, he proclaimed his intention of crowning "the empress Catherine, our dearly beloved consort." In this document, Peter again referred to her services on the banks of the Pruth, which had evidently made a deep impression upon him. "It was in this desperate exigency," said he, "that she especially signalised a zeal and fortitude above her sex; and to this all the army and the whole empire can bear witness. For these causes, and in virtue of the power



which God hath given us, we have resolved, in acknowledgment of all her fatigues and good offices, to honour our consort with the imperial crown." The ceremony was performed with great solemnity at Moscow, on the 28th of May. Peter had not alluded to his intention of making Catherine his successor; but it is probable that this coronation was intended to prepare the people for such a result. The idea gained strength from the fact, that the emperor walked on foot before Catherine in the procession as captain of a new company, which he had created on that occasion, with the title of the "Knights of the Empress." On arriving at the cathedral, Peter himself placed the crown upon the head of his consort. Catherine was much affected, and sank on her knees before him, but he raised her with much gentleness, and calmed her agitation. On leaving the cathedral, the globe and sceptre were, at his command, carried before her.

Peter had taken the family of his late enemy, Charles XII., into his protection, and invited the Duke of Holstein, that monarch's nephew, to the Russian court. Soon after the coronation of Catherine, the emperor bestowed upon this prince the hand of his eldest daughter, Anne Petrowna. This princess bore a considerable resemblance to her father, and united a majestic stature with great beauty. The marriage was celebrated without much show; for the health of the czar was now giving way before a painful disorder from which he had for some time suffered.

A strange story is related concerning Catherine at this period, and treated by some writers as more than apocryphal; but it is supported by the authority of Leclerc, Levesque, and other writers. Voltaire alludes to the circumstance, but omits the darkest portion of it, which he might have done from motives of policy. If it is true, Peter was, with difficulty, restrained from sending to the scaffold the woman upon whose head he had so recently placed the crown. It is to be wished that the story is false; but the subsequent licentiousness and intemperance of the empress, give to it a strong colouring of probability. Peter, though much attached to the sex, was ever rather a sensualist than a lover; and, except in the case of Catherine, never seems to have won the affection of any of the rather numerous list of ladies with whom he had lived on terms of more than ordinary

familiarity. If this narrative be true, we must believe that she also never regarded him with that pure, elevating emotion which is known as love. In that case she might have regarded him with gratitude, or with admiration; but assuredly never with love. The narrative of which we speak runs thus:—Catherine had amongst her chamberlains a very handsome young gentleman, of agreeable manners, named Moens de la Croix, whose sister, many years previously, had for a short time been the mistress of the czar. This sister—then the widow of a Russian general named Balk—was also employed at court in the capacity of first dresser to the empress. Both brother and sister possessed great influence with the empress; and, after a time, a guilty passion sprung up between Catherine and the handsome chamberlain. So unguarded was their conduct, that the suspicions of Peter were aroused, and he caused the empress and her supposed paramour to be watched. The court at this period was held at Peterhoff; and early one morning Prince Repnin, president of the war department, who slept not far from the czar, was roused from his sleep by the door of his chamber being violently thrown open. Starting up, he beheld some one enter abruptly, and soon recognised the czar, who stood by the bedside, his eyes sparkling with rage, and his features livid and distorted with convulsive fury. Repnin remained for a time speechless from astonishment and terror, and fearing that he had in some way excited this storm of passion in the czar, gave himself up for lost. After a pause, the czar, in a hoarse and broken voice, exclaimed—"Get up! speak to me! there's no need to dress yourself." The marshal obeyed; and then learned that the czar, acting upon information conveyed to him by his spies, had suddenly entered the chamber of Catherine, and discovered her in the arms of her paramour. Peter, struck with so monstrous an ingratitude on the part of one to whom he had borne so much affection, expressed his determination of consigning the empress, at daybreak, to the hands of the headsman. Marshal Repnin, having by this time recovered his composure, ventured to expostulate with his sovereign. The unexpected treachery of the empress was, he said, shocking; but he suggested to the czar that her crime was yet known to no one, and that it would be highly impolitic to make it public. He made bold to remind



the czar of the massacre of the Strelitz, and that every subsequent year had been ensanguined with executions; that, in fine, after the imprisonment of his sister, the condemning of his son to death, and the imprisonment of his first wife, if he should likewise cut off the head of the second, the inhabitants of other countries might come to regard him as a ferocious sovereign, who thirsted for the blood of his subjects, and even for that of his own kindred. He added, that the czar might punish Moens by delivering him to the sword of the law upon some other charge; and also find means to get rid of the empress, without any stain upon his honour or his glory.

Peter listened in gloomy silence; and then, suffering frightfully from the convulsions which commonly attacked him while under powerful excitement, he went into the adjoining room, and walked hurriedly backwards and forwards for about two hours. Then, being somewhat subdued, he returned to the marshal, and said—"Moens shall die immediately; and I will watch the empress so closely, that her first slip shall cost her her life!"

Moens and his sister were arrested the next morning, upon an ideal charge of having received bribes from the enemies of the country, for the purpose of inducing the empress to act upon the mind of the czar in a way injurious to the interests of Russia. With a hope of saving the life and honour of the empress, Moens pleaded guilty to the false charge brought against him, was condemned, and beheaded. His sister, who had acted as a pander to his guilt, received five strokes with the knout, and was banished to Siberia; while her sons—one a chamberlain, and the other a page—were compelled to serve in the army as common soldiers, and sent in that capacity to the Persian frontier. Marshal Repnin adds, that the emperor never after spoke to Catherine, except in public; but this is certainly untrue, as she attended him most assiduously during his last illness; and he died in her arms. Probably the narrative we have just related, and which we do not wish our readers to accept without suspicion, is a mingling of truth with falsehood. It is known that Moens, his sister and her sons, were punished in the way we have mentioned, on a charge of accepting guilty bribes. Perhaps Peter *suspected* Moens of being the paramour of the empress, instead of *detecting* him in her chamber at an hour which

left no doubt of guilt. A suspicion would have been enough for so vindictive a man as the czar to have acted upon; and he was not at all likely, having once entertained a suspicion of the fidelity of his consort, to remain almost in indifference until indiscretion ripened into her guilt and his dishonour. We are inclined to believe that Moens fell a victim to the jealous fears of the czar; that Catherine might have been either guilty or innocent (and there is much to favour either supposition), but that she had the address to make Peter believe her the latter, and to regain the tottering place she held in his affections. Certainly, in the almost uxorious passion which the czar entertained for her, she had a powerful advocate.

The health of Peter had for some time been seriously impaired; but he had concealed his disorder from his physicians, and suffered in silence. It was a strangury, from which he sought relief by fits of intemperance, which, while they brought a momentary alleviation, tended in the end to aggravate the severity of his complaint. During the summer of 1724, his sufferings from this cause became so severe, that he was induced, despite his reluctance, to seek the advice of his physicians. They found him in a very dangerous state, and he was compelled to keep his room for nearly four months. Late in the autumn, finding himself much better, he resolved to visit the works on Lake Ladoga, which were not proceeding so rapidly as he wished. His medical attendants expostulated against this imprudence, but in vain. During the whole of October he traversed the fetid marshes in the neighbourhood of the lake. Feeble as he was physically, he had lost nothing of his former mental energy. He discharged the unskilful engineer whose blundering had retarded the progress of the work. "Pisaref," said he to him, "there are two kinds of faults—the one, when we err from ignorance; the other (which is more inexcusable) when we do not make use of our five senses. Why are not the banks of this canal prevented from giving way? Why are there so many windings? Where are the hills which you made an objection? Truly you are an absolute knave!" Turning to the engineer whose plans he approved, the czar addressed him with the title of "friend," and placed 25,000 workmen under his orders.

Impelled by a restless and feverish ac-



tivity, the czar proceeded to the extremity of Lake Ilmen, and also to the salt-works of Starai Roussa. On his return to St. Petersburg he turned from the road and proceeded to Finland, to inspect some manufactories he had established there. Entering the port of Lachta when the sea was rough and the weather threatening, he saw a small vessel, filled with soldiers and sailors, stranded on a shoal, and in danger of perishing from the ignorance of the unskilful mariners. Peter was an able pilot, and he shouted to the men the course they should pursue; but his voice was drowned by the wind and the roaring of the sea. He then sent a shallop to assist them; but those who manned it were timid sailors, and failed to render the required assistance. Resolved to save the poor fellows whose perilous situation had excited his compassion, the czar entered a skiff, and himself pushed off for the spot. As his boat could not reach the shoal, he leaped into the sea, and wading to the boat, succeeded in saving those on board of it, and conveying them to the shore.

For this noble act he paid a severe penalty. He took a violent cold, and during the night his disease returned with all its former severity. A burning fever also seized him, and he suffered acute agonies. He was removed to St. Petersburg, where his alarmed physicians feared that gangrene and its fatal results were not to be averted. Even in this alarming situation, the czar attended to business in every interval of suffering. He laboured to the last; and, as it has been finely said, he paused only to die. Two months he languished in this condition; at times prostrate with suffering, and at others seeming to triumph over disease and impending death, by the force of a will accustomed to subdue everything. About the middle of January, 1725, he even braved the severity of the weather; and, venturing out, attended the ceremony of blessing the water. The following day his most distressing symptoms returned with all their force; and he suffered also from a difficulty of breathing.

The most distinguished physicians that could be procured, not only in St. Petersburg, but also from Leyden and Berlin, were collected around his bed. They used every means known to them to allay his terrible malady; but it is said they only tortured the illustrious patient, whom they sought in vain to save. His agonies were

sometimes so great, that he filled the palace with his cries; then, ashamed of this involuntary expression of his tortured frame, he mournfully exclaimed, that "in him might be plainly seen what a wretched animal is man!"

The czar lingered until about the end of the month, and a few days before his death he resigned himself to his approaching fate; for at first he did not appear to think that his disorder would terminate fatally. On the 26th he received the last consolations of religion, and observed—"I dare hope that God will look upon me with a merciful eye for all the good that I have done to my country!"

To the last he thought of his beloved reforms; and, in intervals of ease and reason (for he was frequently in a state of delirium), he directed Catherine to protect his academy of sciences, and to invite to it the learned men of Europe. Then, pointing out the virtuous and able Count Ostermann to her, he exclaimed—"Russia cannot do without him; he is the only man who knows her real interests." Ever occupied with the labours of life, Peter had neglected to write his will. He now, when it was too late, sought to remedy this oversight. He attempted to write, but his hand was no longer sufficiently steady for that purpose, and, after tracing a few almost illegible words, he was compelled to give up the attempt. When the paper was examined, nothing further could be made out from it than the words—"Give all to ———." Signifying his desire that his favourite daughter, the Princess Anne, should attend, he thought to dictate to her that which his powerless fingers could not set down. Before she arrived, he was seized with a fit which rendered him speechless, and paralysed his left side. For fifteen hours he remained in this sad state, almost between the living and the dead. Catherine watched anxiously by his bedside, which she had scarcely left during three successive nights. At length, on the 28th of January, 1725, about four in the morning, he breathed his last in her arms. Thus, in the fifty-second year of his life, and the forty-third of his reign, died the most remarkable and gifted monarch that Russia has ever possessed.

The body of the deceased emperor was removed into the great hall of the palace, followed by the imperial family, the senate, and an immense number of persons of distinction. It was there laid on a bed of state, and the people admitted to kiss the cold



hand of the potentate who had effected such mighty changes in the empire. His funeral was conducted with a magnificence worthy of his great achievements, and the most distinguished honours were paid to his memory by a people who had at length learned to value the greatness of their imperial reformer; the true founder of modern Russia.

Since the death of Peter the Great, an aggressive and absorbing policy, with respect to other nations, has been observable in the Russian government. This has probably arisen from the necessity it felt for the extension of its seaboard, and the multiplication of its outlets into the great trading seas of Europe; but it has generally been attributed to directions said to be bequeathed by the czar Peter to his successors, and since then handed down as a cabinet secret from sovereign to sovereign. These directions, contained in a document denominated the "Will of Peter the Great," contain a plan for the subjugation of Europe beneath Russian supremacy, and the erection of a colossal empire, extending over the whole civilised and semi-civilised world. We have given the text of this "will" elsewhere,\* and have in the same place reiterated the doubt generally expressed as to its authenticity. That doubt we now repeat; for, upon a further consideration of the contents of this paper, we are inclined to believe it a forgery; though we will admit that it has never undergone such an investigation—at least such a known and open investigation—as the subject appears to demand. It is scarcely possible that so important and dangerous a cabinet secret should have been allowed to become public; for the promulgation of it might have roused all the rest of Europe into a crusade against a neighbour whose policy they must have regarded as incompatible with general tranquillity, or even safety. But how do the believers in this state paper account for its being made public? They say that the empress Elizabeth, enamoured of the notorious Chevalier d'Eon (a creature of tainted character and doubtful sex, who was sent from the court of France to Russia as a secret agent), allowed him extraordinary opportunities for making important discoveries, and that he transmitted this document to Louis XV. in 1757. The tale is a romantic and suspicious one. Certainly the will first became public through the medium of D'Eon; and what more probable than that he composed it, taking as

his cue some vague hints dropped by Russian statesmen or politicians, whose ambition and national vanity were much greater than their prudence and their wisdom.

But apart from the suspicious nature of the external evidence given in support of the authenticity of this paper, we do not think that an examination of the contents of it favours the supposition that it represents the matured thoughts of Peter the Great. A scheme of universal conquest by a man who never fought a single battle for the sake of glory, but ever regarded war only as a means to some useful and profitable end! It has an air of incredibility. Of what use would the sovereignty of Europe have been to Peter or his successors? To achieve it, would exhaust the strength of Russia in incessant wars; to maintain it, would be to convert half her population into a military police, and to engage her in the continual suppression of revolutions, which, by their number, and the bloody fury with which they would inevitably be conducted, would probably ultimately triumph, from the internal feebleness and inanition of their despot. European dominion would have distracted Russia from itself, and it would have fallen back towards barbarism, and probably been broken up again into petty and insignificant states. Such extensive rule could not be grasped by any ordinary hand, nor conducted by any merely human head. Beneath a powerful sovereign such an empire would be always threatened with disruption; and the accession of a weak one would inevitably be followed by confusion, war, and ruin. In later days the great Napoleon tried to realise the day-dream of European conquest, and the result was ruin to himself, prostration to France. Peter understood these views. "It is," said he, on one occasion, "not land, but *water*, that Russia wants." Russia had, in his time, more land than her population could reclaim from the barren wildness of nature; and such is yet the case. Russia requires concentration and compression, not extension; for assuredly any great extension would lead to its widely-separated parts falling asunder, and becoming divided, and perhaps antagonistic states.

As to the idle rant which the "will" attributes to Peter, about Russia regenerating worn-out Europe, a very little reflection will show that the attempt at Russian supremacy would be far more likely to barbarise Europe. The great czar knew this, and he regarded the old states of Europe with ad-

\* *History of the War with Russia*, vol. ii., p. 83.



miration. He studied civilisation from them, and ever held them up to his nobles and people as models. He was aware that Europe had nothing to learn from Russia, but that Russia had everything to learn from Europe. So strongly did this conviction appear in his actions, that he has been reproached as having forced upon the Russians an imitative civilisation unsuited to their national character, in preference to letting their better qualities slowly develop themselves. We do not share this opinion, for Peter had to do with a vast nation of semi-savages, whom he was compelled to rend abruptly away from their barbarous habits, and to coerce into decency and humanity. It was necessary to tell them what to do, and how to think; to open their minds; and reform, nay, altogether recreate, their manners. With this object, he compelled them to dress, and live, mingle together, and marry like the inhabitants of the most polished states of Europe. Yet we are told that the far-seeing, deep-thinking czar, who never talked for display, and was as plain in his speech and writing as he was in his dress, babbled about Russia fertilising and regenerating worn-out Europe.\* Peter's own opinion of his subjects was not a flattering one; assuredly he did not regard them as civilizers. To those around him, he would exclaim—"You may make war on wild beasts; it is a pleasure which is not unbecoming to you; but as for me, I cannot amuse myself in such a manner, while I have so many to combat in my obstinate and intractable subjects. *They are animals whom I have dressed like men.* I often despair of overcoming their pertinacity, and eradicating their wickedness from their hearts. Let me, therefore, be no longer painted as a cruel tyrant by those who are unacquainted with the circumstances which have imperiously directed my conduct: what numbers of persons have thwarted my designs, rendered abortive my most beneficial plans for the country, and compelled me to use the utmost rigour. I sought for their assistance, and appealed to their patriotism. Those who have comprehended and seconded me, and have been the most useful to my people, I have loaded with rewards; they have been my only favourites!"

\* That the existing military despotisms of Europe will be comparatively short-lived, is probable; that they must eventually perish, is certain; but the regenerating power will not come from without, but arise from *within*. Nations become decrepit, but man is ever young. The worn-out, expiring empire

The character of Peter was a complex one; made up of diverse, and in some respects discordant, qualities. Few men are wholly good or wholly evil: almost all are both good and evil, according to the passion or appetite which predominates at the time; for our virtues and our vices spring from the same germ; and the last are but a morbid exaggeration of the first. Though a great and most original man, Peter was still but an extraordinary barbarian, who all his life offered a noble homage to the civilisation which he admired, but did not possess. He once observed, after a fit of intoxication, during which he had been guilty of some violence, that he could reform his subjects, but he could not reform himself—an admission as sad as it was evidently true. Such was the vehemence and untameable energy of this great, wild man—this Sampson, who pulled down the temple of barbarism, and crushed its obstinate votaries beneath its ruins—that his habitual industry extended to his vices. He was a drunkard, even to the glaring, wolfish madness of intoxication; and a coarse sensualist, even to that point where depraved appetite sinks into pruriency. His ferocity was such, that, when thoroughly aroused, he panted for blood; and the sighs and agonizing moans of wretches on the rack, the wheel, or the impaling stake, were as horrible music to his ears. Such were his vices, and they are terrible ones; but every allowance should be made for this great creature, whose boyhood was purposely exposed to contamination, whose education was such as he himself gathered without any guide on whom he could rely, and who was exposed to obstacles which would have overwhelmed almost any other man. The frantic opposition he had to subdue in his crusade of civilisation, is an acceptable, if not altogether sufficient apology for his cruelty; while his drunkenness and licentiousness were merely personal vices, and did not affect his people.

Great as were the vices of this illustrious sovereign, his noble qualities far outshone them. He was the most industrious of men, and commonly both frugal and self-denying. He idolised his country, lived for it utterly, laboured for it incessantly, and,

which is torn asunder by revolutions, or divided by the swords of conquerors, yields in its dying struggles those germs which, in the grand career of time, ripen into young and more teachable nations. Nature is ever employed in renewing the youth of the world.



by his almost superhuman exertions, raised it from a distracted, barbarous, and despised state to a powerful empire, with a numerous and a highly-disciplined army; a navy which was not only promising, but powerful; a commerce which was rapidly becoming a broad and inexhaustible source of wealth; and a reputation for national dignity and influence second to no state in Europe. Never did he abandon his exertions for the exaltation and benefit of his native land. We are struck with wonder and admiration at the number and extent of his labours, and the untiring perseverance with which he urged them into practice. He greatly enlarged the boundaries of the empire, and gave it an outlet to the sea, both in the north and in the south. His navies arose with a rapidity that resembled the fabulous works of enchantment, and his fleets feared no foe, either upon the waters of the Baltic or the Euxine. Hitherto the army of Russia had been little better than a savage and riotous mob; this he exterminated, and supplied its place by one organised upon the systems pursued by the most military nations of Europe. He established many institutions for the cultivation of science, literature, and the arts, and also for humane and charitable purposes. Above all, he modified and improved the character of the people; softened their sullen and brutal manners; gave touches of social grace to their domestic life; did something towards breaking up their apathetic ignorance and superstition; and, indeed, raised them in the scale of existence. These things make the impartial mind look with a glance of regret upon his ferocity, his storms of passion, his wild impulses, and his vulgar riots. It is difficult to dwell harshly on these painful topics, when we contemplate the character of the heroic sovereign to whom his people gave, with acclamations, the title of FATHER, and whose grateful descendants regard him with a feeling approaching adoration, as the embodiment of the tutelary Genius of the Empire.

Here we shall introduce a few anecdotes and remarks concerning Peter, which are rather illustrative of his character than of the history of his country. He was an early riser, commonly leaving his bed at the hour of four, even during the winter, and lighting his own fire. He dined at one; and though not a large feeder, would eat anything except fish, to which he had an

antipathy. He altogether discarded the solitary state, during meals, of his predecessors on the imperial throne, and loved to dine with Dutch and English skippers, with whom he conversed familiarly, and enjoyed his clay pipe and mug of quass.

Sometimes the czar would pilot the foreign vessels that came to Cronstadt; on which occasions he always took his pay like other pilots, chiefly because he desired to render the service honourable. He commonly received the ambassadors sent to Russia, wherever he chanced to be, without any ceremony; because, he said, they were accredited to his person, and not to any hall or palace. M. Printz, the Prussian ambassador, was taken on board a ship to be introduced to the czar, where Peter, who was aloft, shouted to him to climb up into the maintop, though the eccentric sovereign came down to the quarter-deck, on his visitor pleading his want of practice as an excuse for not complying with so unusual a request. Occasionally, the czar's humours placed those who shared them in dangerous positions. One day he invited several foreign ministers to accompany him on a trip by water from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt. About half-way the vessel was caught in a sudden storm. One of the ambassadors implored the czar, who was steersman, to make for the shore. "We shall all be lost," he added, in accents of terror, "and your majesty will have to answer for my life to the king my master." Peter laughed as he replied, "Sir, if you are drowned, we shall all go to the bottom with you, and there will be nobody left to answer to your court for your excellency's life."

The czar usually indulged in an hour's sleep after dinner. When he was from home he would lie down for this refreshment on the deck of a ship, the floor of a hut, or even the bare ground, if no more convenient resting-place was to be had. When disposed to sleep, the officer in attendance upon him had to lie down and support his master's head on his belly, in which position he was expected to remain as still as the pillow he represented. If by a motion, cough, or sneeze, he woke the czar, the latter kicked or thumped him for his restlessness. Indeed, no one about him was secure from personal violence, as, when offended, he frequently struck or caned his principal officers or nobles, even in public. So common had this become, that the sense



of degradation attending it was lost sight of, and, by a pleasant fiction, those who suffered such chastisement, regarded it as a sort of fatherly correction. Having on one occasion beaten some of his ministers for a fault which they afterwards satisfied him had not been committed, he rendered a sort of apology by acknowledging his mistake, and promising to make an allowance the next time they deserved chastisement. With this impetuous irritability, he was patient and courteous to all persons who desired to lay some useful project before him. He caused the requisite experiments to be made in his presence, and liberally rewarded those who devised anything new, and, not unfrequently, even those who deceived themselves. To the latter, he would kindly explain the causes of their mistake; because, he said, he wished to encourage them to do something better. In the same generous temper, he would stand godfather to the children even of the poorest persons who had the confidence to request such a favour at his hands. He would also occasionally dine and talk familiarly with the common soldiers, and behave towards them with so much simplicity, that he seemed for the time rather their companion than their sovereign. Such popular manners, as soon as they were understood by the then unsocial Russian people, much endeared the czar to his subjects.

With all Peter's manual labours he did not neglect mental cultivation. He not only ordered a number of useful works to be translated into the Russian language, but also translated several himself. Amongst the latter were *L'Architecture de Sebastien Leclerc*, *L'Art de Tourner, par Plumier* (the czar was a very skilful turner), and *L'Art des Ecluses et des Moulins, par Sturm*. The manuscripts of these, in the handwriting of the emperor, are still preserved at St. Petersburg. In any Russian version which he ordered to be made of a foreign work, if, as sometimes happened, the translator modified passages which reflected upon the Russians, Peter would severely rebuke him, and have the passage literally rendered. "He did not," he observed, "want to flatter his subjects, but to instruct them; and, especially, to show them what they had been, and what foreigners thought of them, that he might stimulate them to change, by their exertions, the opinion of Europe."

In the gusts of passion to which the czar was subject, a manly and fearless expostu-

lation would sometimes disarm his fury. One day, while on board a boat, he, in a fit of anger, seized a senator who had offended him, and was about to hurl him into the water, when the other exclaimed—"You may drown me, but your history will tell of this." Peter felt the reproof, and, admiring the self-possession of the man who gave it, set him down unhurt.

We will conclude this chapter with a curious picture of the manners of Peter and his court while at table. Assuredly the Russians of that period were disgustingly coarse in their habits; and their conduct, as here described, forms a striking contrast to the highly-polished manners and personal dignity of the Russian nobles and gentry of the present day. The following description is taken from a manuscript in the handwriting of Dr. Birch, contained among the Sloane papers in the British Museum:—"There are twenty-four cooks belonging to the kitchen of the Russian court, who are all Russians; and as people of that nation use a great deal of onions, garlic, and train oil in dressing their meat, and employ linseed and walnut oil for their provisions, there is such an intolerable stink in their kitchen, that no stranger is able to bear it, especially the cooks being such nasty fellows, that the very sight of them is enough to turn one's stomach; these are the men who, on great festivals, dress about seventy or eighty or more dishes. But the fowls which are for the czar's own eating are very often dressed by his grand marshal, Alseffiof, who is running up and down, with his apron before him, among the other cooks till it is time to take up dinner, when he puts on his fine clothes and full-bottomed wig, and helps to serve up the dinner. The number of persons invited is generally two or three hundred, though there is room for no more than above a hundred at four or five tables; but as there is no place assigned to anybody, and none of the Russians are willing to go home with an empty stomach, everybody is obliged to seize his chair and hold it with all his force, if he will not have it snatched from him.

"The czar being come in, and having chosen a place for himself, there is such scuffling and fighting for chairs, that nothing more scandalous can be seen in any company, though the czar does not mind it in the least, nor does he take care for putting a stop to such disorder, pretending that a ceremony, and the formal regulations of a



marshal, make people sit uneasy and spoil the pleasure of conversation. Several foreign ministers have complained of this to the czar, and refuse to dine any more at court, but all the answer they got was, that it was not the czar's business to turn master of the ceremonies, and please foreigners, nor was it his intention to abolish the freedom once introduced; this obliged strangers for the future to follow the Russian fashion, in defending the possession of their chairs, by cuffing and boxing their opposer. The company thus sitting down to table without any manner of grace, they all sit so crowded together, that they have much ado to lift their hands to their mouths; and if a stranger happens to sit between two Russians, which is commonly the case, he is sure of losing his stomach, though he should have happened to have eaten nothing for two days before. Carpenters and shipwrights sit next to the czar; but senators, ministers, generals, priests, sailors, buffoons of all kinds, sit pell-mell without any distinction. The first course consists of nothing but cold meats, among which are hams, dried tongues, and the like, which, not being liable to such tricks as shall be mentioned hereafter, strangers ordinarily make their whole meal of them, without tasting anything else, though generally speaking, every one takes his dinner beforehand at home.

"Soups and roasted meats make the second course, and pastry the third. As soon as one sits down, one is obliged to drink a cup of brandy, after which they ply you with great glasses of adulterated Tokay, and other vitiated wines, and between whiles, a bumper of the strongest English beer, by which mixture of liquors every one of the guests is fuddled before the soup is served up. The company being in this condition, make such a noise, racket, hallooing, that it is impossible to hear one another, or even to hear the music, which is playing in the next room, consisting of a sort of trumpets and cornets; for the czar hates violins; and with this revelling noise and uproar the czar is extremely diverted, particularly if the guests fall to boxing and get bloody noses.

"Formerly the company had no napkin given them, but instead of it they had a piece of very coarse linen given them by a servant, who brought in the whole piece under his arm, and cut off half an ell for every person, which they are at liberty to carry home with them; for it had been

observed that these pilfering guests used sometimes to pocket the napkins; but at present two or three Russians must make shift with but one napkin, which they pull and haul for, like hungry dogs for a bone. Each person of the company has but one plate during dinner; so if some Russian does not care to mix the sauces of the different dishes together, he pours the soup that is left in his plate either into the dish or into his neighbour's plate, or even under the table, after which he licks his plate clean with his finger, and, last of all, wipes it with the tablecloth. The tables are each thirty or forty feet long, and ten-and-a-half broad; three or four messes of one and the same course are served up to each table; the dessert consists of divers sorts of pastry and fruits, but the czaritza's table is furnished with sweetmeats: however, it is to be observed that these sweetmeats are only set out on great festivals for a show, and that the Russians of the best fashion have nothing for their dessert but the produce of the kitchen-garden, as peas, beans, &c., all raw. At great entertainments it frequently happens that nobody is allowed to go out of the room from noon till midnight; hence it is easy to imagine what a pickle a room must be in, that is full of people who drink like beasts, and none of them escape being dead drunk.

"They often tie eight or ten young mice in a string, and hide them under green peas, or in such soups as the Russians have the greatest appetite to, which sets them a kicking and vomiting in a most beastly manner, when they come to the bottom and discover the trick; they often bake cats, wolves, ravens, and the like, in their pastries, and when the company have eaten them up, they tell them what they have devoured.

"The present butler is one of the czar's buffoons, to whom he has given the name of *Wiaschi*, with this privilege, that if any one else calls him by that name he has leave to drub him with his wooden sword. If, therefore, anybody, by the czar's setting them on, calls out '*Wiaschi*?' as the fellow does not know exactly who it was, he falls a beating them all round, beginning with Prince Mentschikoff and ending with the last of the company, without excepting even the ladies, whom he strips of their head-clothes, as he does the old Russians with their wigs, which he tramples upon; on which occasion it is pleasant enough to see



the variety of their bald pates. Besides these employments or entertainments, the said Wiaschi is also surveyor of the ice, and executioner for torturing people, on which occasion he gives them the knout himself;

and his remarkable dexterity in this detestable business has already procured him above 30,000 thalers, the sixth part of the confiscated estates of the sufferer being his perquisite."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

ATTEMPT TO PLACE PETER'S GRANDSON ON THE THRONE; CATHERINE BECOMES EMPRESS; POPULARITY OF HER EARLY PROCEEDINGS; HER LICENTIOUSNESS; LIBELS CONCERNING HER; HER DEATH; PETER, THE SON OF ALEXIS, ASCENDS THE THRONE; DISGRACE OF MENTSCHIKOFF; PREMATURE DEATH OF THE CZAR.

THE old party, which clung to the perishing customs of the past, was not extinct in Russia. Peter had awed the factious among the nobles, and the perversely bigoted among the people, into silence; but he had not convinced them of the efficacy of his reforms. The czar knew this, and, doubtless, looked to the next generation for an appreciation of his changes.

While the speechless, delirious, and paralysed emperor lay on his bed awaiting the moment which released him from his sufferings, secret cabals were in progress for the purpose of bestowing the sceptre on the party identified with the interests of those who composed these political conclaves. The old party, amongst whom were many of the principal nobility, desired to place Peter Alexievitch upon the throne; to arrest Catherine; to abolish the institutions that had been established by the dying czar; to banish all the foreigners who had assisted in the introduction of novelties; and to restore the empire to its primitive barbarism. The mean origin of Prince Mentschikoff, added to the insolence of his bearing, made them resolve to include him in the ruin of the empress. It was therefore the intention of the conspirators to send her to the dreary solitude of a convent, and him to the frozen deserts of Siberia.

Mentschikoff was informed of these designs, and his interests were thus more completely identified with those of Catherine. His measures were prompt and effective. As soon as he knew that the czar was actually dying, he seized the royal treasures, caused them to be conveyed into the citadel, and secured the officers of the guards to his interest by bribes and promises. Then

assembling a council of some of the principal clergy, senators, and officers in the palace, he led Catherine into their presence. Briefly addressing them, she claimed the throne in right of her coronation at Moscow; referred to the dangers which might be anticipated should it be occupied by a minor; and promised that, "so far from depriving the grand-duke of the crown, she would receive it only as a sacred deposit, to be restored to him when she should be united, in another world, to an adored husband, whom she was now upon the point of losing." This address, the utterance of which was broken by tears, had considerable effect; yet, when Catherine withdrew and left the meeting to deliberate, the general opinion was not altogether favourable to her claim.

As soon as Peter was dead, the great nobles and the most influential of the clergy thronged to the palace, with the intention of carrying out their views respecting the proclamation of the new sovereign. The adherents of the son of Alexis were confident of success, and the cause of Catherine seemed doomed. Yet it was stronger than her enemies believed. Count Bassevitz, one of her most active partisans, whispered to a chief of the opposite party—"The empress is mistress of the treasure and the fortress; she has gained over the guards, the synod, and many of the chief nobility. Even here she has more followers than you imagine. Advise, therefore, your friends to make no opposition as they value their heads."

The rapid circulation of this statement produced a considerable effect among the worldly, the timid, and the irresolute mem-



bers of that distinguished meeting. The signal was then given for the two regiments of guards—who, won by heavy bribes, had declared for Catherine, and were stationed around the palace—to beat to arms. A pause of excitement and consternation was followed by some angry words between Marshal Repnin (the commander-in-chief) and General Butterlin, who had ordered out the troops, as he said, “in obedience to the commands of my most gracious mistress.” At this moment Catherine entered, preceded by Mentschikoff, and supported by her son-in-law, the Duke of Holstein. After some struggle to subdue her emotion (which we have no right to assume was not perfectly sincere), she said—“I come, notwithstanding the grief which now overwhelms me, to assure you that, submissive to the will of my departed husband, whose memory will be ever dear to me, I am ready to devote my days to the painful occupations of government, until Providence shall summon me to follow him.” Then, after a brief pause, she added—“If the grand-duke will profit by my instructions, perhaps I shall have the consolation, during my wretched widowhood, of forming for you an emperor worthy of the blood and the name of him whom you have now irretrievably lost.” Mentschikoff then observed—“As this is a crisis of such importance to the good of the empire, and requires the most mature deliberation, your majesty will permit us to confer without restraint, that this great business may be transacted without reproach, not only in the opinion of the present age, but also of posterity.” Catherine readily assented; and having gratuitously promised to submit to the decision of the assembly, whatever it might be, she retired.

Mentschikoff, who had arranged what followed, then demanded of the secretary of the deceased emperor, whether his late master had left any written declaration of his intentions with respect to who should succeed him. The secretary answered according to his instructions. He said—“That the emperor, a little before his last journey to Moscow, had destroyed a will, and that he had frequently expressed his design of making another; but had always been prevented by the reflection, that if he thought his people, whom he had raised from a state of barbarism to a high degree of power and glory, could be ungrateful, he would not expose his final inclinations to

the insult of a refusal; and that if they recollected what they owed to his labours, they would regulate their conduct by his intentions, which he had disclosed with more solemnity than could be manifested by any writing.” This ambiguous reply was not generally regarded with satisfaction; some confusion arose, and several of the nobles of the old party opposed the accession of Catherine. At this point, Theophanes, one of the high dignitaries of the church, reminded all present of the oath which they had taken in 1722, to acknowledge the successor appointed by the late emperor; whose sentiments, just delivered by his secretary, clearly pointed to Catherine as the person whom he desired to fill the throne after him. The opposite party declared the sentiments of the late emperor, as enunciated by his secretary, were not so clear as he assumed them to be; and maintained, that as Peter had failed to nominate his heir, the election of the new sovereign should revert to the empire.

The archbishop Theophanes again interfered in favour of Catherine, and testified, that the evening before her coronation at Moscow, he had heard the czar declare that he should place the crown upon her head with no other view than to leave her mistress of the empire after his death. This statement was confirmed by other persons present; and Mentschikoff then cried aloud, “What need have we of any testament? A refusal to conform to the inclination of our great sovereign, thus authenticated, would be both unjust and criminal. Long live the empress Catherine!” This shout was repeated by the majority of those present, and vehemently responded to by the troops without, to whom Catherine presented herself at the windows of the palace, while Mentschikoff scattered handfuls of money amongst them. Thus, it has been observed, was the empress raised to the throne by the guards, in the same manner as the Roman emperors by the prætorian cohorts, without either the appointment of the people or of the legions.

The accession of the low-born Catherine to the imperial throne, though it was greatly in opposition to the desires of the proud old nobility of the empire, was yet welcomed with acclamations by the people. The late emperor had been much attached to her, and she had repaid his affection by an entire devotion to him, and also by such heroic services as are seldom per-



formed by women. What so natural as for them to transfer to her the loyalty they bore towards him. Besides, the army loved her; for she had often accompanied the soldiers in their marches, and shared their toils.

The satisfaction of the people was augmented by the popularity and humaneness of the early acts of the reign of the new sovereign. The annual capitation-tax, which was regarded as a heavy burden, she reduced one-eighth. Most of the persons whom Peter had banished to Siberia she pardoned and permitted to return. The numerous gibbets which, during the late reign, had been erected in various parts of the country, were cut down, and the decaying bodies suspended upon them, buried. The army was paid all the arrears due to it, and many privileges of which the Cossacks had been deprived by Peter, were restored to them. The various officers of state were retained in their situations, and all parties conciliated. Thus every precaution was taken to secure peace within the empire; while, as a defence against external enemies, Catherine augmented the army, maintained the navy in a state of efficiency, and, in the first year of her reign (1726), contracted a treaty with the emperor of Germany, by which these two potentates reciprocally guaranteed to assist each other with an army of 30,000 men in case of necessity. By the last arrangement Catherine hoped to obtain for her daughter's husband, the Duke of Holstein, the succession to the throne of Sweden, and to compel the king of Denmark to restore to him the duchy of Schleswig. She even contemplated resorting to arms to obtain for the duke those possessions to which she considered him entitled; but she was induced to forego these threatened hostilities by the indifference of her senate to a dispute which they considered merely personal.

The brief reign of Catherine was not distinguished by any event which can be regarded as important by the historian. Indeed, it has been designated the reign of Mentschikoff; for that active and ambitious minister directed the chief affairs of state, which the empress herself showed neither ability nor inclination to guide. Mentschi-

koff had, to some extent, been the means of introducing her to fortune, and she placed the most implicit confidence both in his ability and his faithfulness to her interests. But it was not to indolence alone that Catherine now gave way. Either from the influence of early habits, or powerful passions, from which the check of a husband's presence was now removed, she became very irregular and dissipated in her conduct. Extremely intemperate, she frequently indulged to excess in Tokay wine, while from among the gentlemen of her court, she selected two favourites at once, on both of whom she bestowed her caresses. So open was this licentiousness, that the rival candidates for her favours met each other without reserve, made it their sole business to please their mistress, and alternately received proofs of her tenderness, without suffering their tranquillity to be marred by mutual jealousy.

This unbecoming behaviour strengthened the dislike borne to Catherine by the old anti-reform party, and gave their cause a fictitious appearance of being associated with that of public morality. Satirical papers were constantly circulated, with the object of depriving her of the respect of the people, and the grossest observations were made concerning her birth, her family, and her early career. So bitter and offensive did these slanderous papers become, that at length the empress, stung into a resentment scarcely natural to her whose sweetness of temper had become almost proverbial, threatened to punish with death any person who spoke or wrote disrespectfully of herself or her family. This threat did not silence the libellers of the empress, whose irregularities of life further excited the enmity of her traducers. One circumstance that gave a colour to the popular scandals, was the arrival at St. Petersburg of her brother, who had never been heard of before, and on whom, for the sake, it was supposed, of averting further discoveries, she conferred the title of Count Skavronski. Something of suspicion attached to this event, in consequence of the general belief that prevailed, that the empress had no knowledge whatever of the members of her family.\*

\* Voltaire says that Peter was acquainted with this presumed brother of Catherine; and on the authority of a person at that time in the service of the czar, he relates the following story, which though usually discredited, has in it nothing improbable, or inconsistent with the character of such a sovereign as Peter:—"An envoy from King Augustus to the

czar, returning to Dresden through Courland, overheard in an inn a man, whose apparel betraying necessitous circumstances, was the cause of his being treated with that contempt and insult to which such a condition is too often exposed. The stranger, with proper resentment, said to them, that could he but once come to the speech of the czar, they who made



During the reign of Catherine two impostors arose, each assuming the name of the deceased Prince Alexis, and, in imitation of the Dmitris, attempting to dispute the claim of the empress to the throne. Their claims were, however, too transparently impudent to obtain credence, and the authors of them both expiated their vulgar fraud upon the scaffold.

The life of Catherine was doubtless shortened by dissipation; but the atmosphere of slander and ill-will with which she was surrounded, preyed upon her mind, and probably increased those intemperate habits which proved so fatal both to her reputation and her life. The rise of Prince Mentschikoff from the streets to be the most powerful man in the empire; the insolence of his behaviour to the old aristocracy; the story of his former connexion with the empress, and his present position near her person—all contributed to aggravate the malice of the discontented, and to give greater bitterness and point to their sarcasms. During the life of Peter, Catherine exhibited many virtues; but her character, exalted by her connection with him, seemed to lose strength when he was removed from her. It has been correctly said, that the latter period of her short reign discovered not only the

abandonment of that admirable line of conduct which had secured to her the attachment of the nation, but the adoption of habits which, if death had not removed her from the throne, must have ultimately rendered her unfit to sustain the imperial duties. It is probable that, had she continued much longer to preside over the affairs of the empire, she would have committed herself to such acts of impropriety as would have finally led to her dethronement.

Catherine expired on the 17th of May, 1727, a little more than two years after her accession to the throne, and about the thirty-ninth year of her age. Her death is usually, and most likely correctly, attributed to a cancer and a dropsy, induced by her irregularities. Suspicious rumours, however, prevailed concerning the cause of her demise, which some writers attribute to poison. It is commonly supposed that the diseases brought on by her intemperate habits, in conjunction with her eccentric custom of passing whole nights in the open air, either walking or riding in sledges, produced the fatal result.

In person, the empress was below the average height of women. She was delicate and graceful in youth, but became rather corpulent as she advanced in life. With

so free with him, would change their note, as at that prince's court he should find greater friends than was imagined. At this the envoy had the curiosity to question the person who pretended to such interest at court; and on his vague answers, viewing him more attentively, he thought that in many of his features, he discerned some resemblance to the empress. Arriving at Dresden, he could not forbear writing to a friend of his at St. Petersburg, about this adventure. The letter was shown to the czar, who sent instructions to Prince Repnin, governor of Riga, to make an inquiry after the man mentioned in the letter; and by the diligence of a person whom the prince dispatched to Mittau in Courland, he was found out. His name, he said, was Charles Scavronski; he was son to a Lithuanian gentleman who had been killed in the Polish wars, leaving two children in the cradle, a boy and a girl; both had no education but from nature, being destitute of every thing. Scavronski having been separated from his sister in their childhood, all he knew of her was, that she had been taken at Marienburg in 1704, and he believed her still to be with Prince Mentschikoff, in whose family he imagined she might have mended her condition. Prince Repnin, according to express orders from his master, had Scavronski brought to Riga under pretence of some state crime; and a kind of charge being drawn up against him, he was sent under a strong guard to St. Petersburg, but with directions that he should be well used on the road. At St. Petersburg, he was immediately carried to a steward of the czar's, named Shepleff, who being instructed in the part he was to act drew from this man several

particulars relating to his condition, after which he told him, that the charge sent against him from Riga was of a very serious nature, but that he should have fair play; that his best way would be to present to his majesty a petition, which should be drawn up in his name, and that ways and means should be found out for him to deliver it himself. The next day the czar dining with Shepleff, as had been concerted, Scavronski was brought before him: his answers to the czar's questions being perfectly natural and consistent, Peter was fully convinced of his being the very brother of the czarina. In their childhood they had both been in Livonia; all Scavronski's answers to the czar's questions perfectly coincided with what his spouse had told him about her birth, and the early misfortunes of her life. The czar having now no longer any doubt about Scavronski, proposed to his spouse the day following to go and dine at Mr. Shepleff's: after dinner, he ordered Scavronski to be brought in; he appeared in the same clothes which he had worn in his journey, it being the czar's order that he should not be seen in any other garb than that to which his misfortunes had habituated him. He again questioned him before his consort, and according to the manuscript, on finishing his question, he said these very words:—"This man is thy brother; come Charles, kiss the empress's hand, and embrace thy sister." The author of this account adds, that the empress fainted, and that on her recovery the czar said to her, "There is nothing in this that is in the least mysterious. This gentleman is my brother-in-law: if he has merit, we will make something of him; if not, we must leave him as he is."



dark eyes, she possessed a fair complexion and light hair, which she had the bad taste to dye black. It is asserted that she could neither read nor write, and that Count Ostermann signed her name to all the despatches. Her natural abilities did not rise much above the average of those of women generally; but in her connection with Peter, she exhibited much of that fidelity, self-denial, and personal fearlessness which ever mingles largely with the heroic. Her influence over the czar arose from a source purely womanly; it was the soft charm of sweetness of temper, not the proud spell of mental power. Men of such laborious habits as Peter, and whose minds are almost always stretched upon the rack of excitement, usually love those women in whose society they can find repose. Stern as they may be to the world, yet, in the brief placid hours they yield to domestic life, they also perhaps inwardly murmur, "Blessed is the woman who consoles." This was the part of Catherine; to cheer the great man in those gloomy hours when his strong nature yielded to sadness, or, almost overwhelmed with difficulties, staggered with uncertain steps near the sharp precipice of despair. When enclosed within living walls on the banks of the Pruth; when tortured by the mental blindness and ingratitude of a son whom he sought in vain to convert into a worthy successor; or racked by an agonising disease which wrung groans from his iron frame—the czar ever found Catherine at hand to speak those soothing words, render those tender courtesies, which tranquillise and console. It was to this, and not to strength of intellect or quickness of imagination, that she owed the affection borne to her by her illustrious husband. Motraye observed—"She had in some sort the government of all the czar's passions; and even saved the lives of a great many more persons than Lefort was able to do. She inspired him with that humanity which, in the opinion of his subjects, nature seemed to have denied him. A word from her mouth in favour of a wretch just going to be sacrificed to his anger, would disarm him; but if he was fully resolved to satisfy that passion, he would give orders for the execution when she was absent, for fear she should plead for the victim." The celebrated Munich also declared, that "she was the mediatrix between the monarch and his subjects."

It is much to be regretted that the later

incidents of the career of Catherine should sully the period of her life which had been passed without reproach. The irregularities of her early life it requires no great exercise of charity to pardon, but those of her later days do not admit of apology. "The power of early habits," says a writer to whom we have been much indebted, "unless it be restrained by strong motives, or curbed by the presence of overruling authority, extends to the last moments of life, even should it have been suppressed during a long interval of years. Such seems to have been the case with the empress Catherine; nor shall we find, upon a close analysis of her history, that she was exactly placed in a situation to discourage the lurking propensities of the class from which she sprung, until a very short period before her death. Her connection with Peter, if not actually ambiguous, was at least private, and graced by none of the privileges of the nominal eminence to which it apparently elevated her. Her coronation invested her, for the first time, with authority; previously to that event she was the chamber confidant of the czar, the creature of his will, and the nurse of his distempers. It is true that he married her privately; but, unlike Madame Maintenon, she could not confer upon that secret union those ennobling embellishments of feeling and of intellect that would have rendered it respectable. The blemishes of her private life, worse than the blemish on her birth, could never be obliterated. It cannot, therefore, excite much wonder that, when she came at last into the possession of unbounded authority, released from the surveillance of a rigid sovereign, and left to the free play of her natural tendencies, she should have terminated her course in a way consistent with the spirit of its opening."

Catherine, by will, bequeathed the throne to the grandson of her late husband, and son of the bigoted and unfortunate Alexis. Thus, in the year 1727, Peter Alexievitch, then in the eleventh year of his age, became, both by hereditary right and the will of the late sovereign, emperor of Russia under the title of Peter II. By the will of Catherine, the young czar was placed under the guardianship of the princesses Anne and Elizabeth, the Duke of Holstein, and certain members of the council, until he should attain his sixteenth year. The will had evidently been drawn up either by, or under the dictation of, Mentschikoff, for he was appointed president of the council of



regency; and it also provided that the young emperor, when of proper age, should be united to his daughter. The commission of regency soon became powerless and inoperative; no member dared to vote except as Mentschikoff desired, and he continued to sway the almost absolute power he had held during the life of Catherine.

Prince Mentschikoff paid great court to the young emperor, and adopted a parental tone towards him, labouring earnestly at the same time to obtain an absolute ascendancy over the boy-czar. By this means he embittered still further the jealous feelings entertained towards him by those nobles of high birth whom he kept at a distance from the person of their sovereign. Many of these had long looked with anxiety for his fall; and several incidents now combined to promote it. Indeed, a secret cabal of some of the most distinguished persons at court was formed against him, and his eventual ruin became almost a matter of certainty. They placed about the person of the emperor a youth named Ivan Dolgoruki, a member of one of the most ancient families in Russia. This lad, as it was anticipated, obtained the confidence of Peter, and, in hours of familiarity, poured into his ear those feelings of bitterness against Mentschikoff which the old aristocratic party entertained. Young Dolgoruki represented that the low-born adventurer usurped an authority which it was neither becoming nor safe for him to possess; that he kept the sovereign in a state of vassalage; and that both the nobles and people expected the emperor would release himself from an authority which degraded him and injured the state. These arguments were the more effective from the fact that Peter had taken a dislike to his proposed bride, Maria Mentschikoff, and sought to be released from her by any means that offered. Every action of the hated president was watched, and he was soon detected in appropriating to himself a considerable sum of money which Peter had sent as a present to one of his relatives. He unexpectedly taxed Mentschikoff with this offence, and observing the confusion of the minister, angrily ordered him from his presence. A sentence of confiscation and banishment was immediately pronounced against the arrogant and grasping statesman. His enormous wealth, accumulated by corruption and oppression, and consisting of 9,000,000 roubles in bank notes and

obligations, 1,000,000 in cash, 105 lbs. of gold utensils, 420 lbs. of silver plate, and precious stones to the value of about 1,000,000, besides his estates, his palace, and his costly furniture, were all seized for the advantage of the imperial treasury. He himself, together with his family, including even the betrothed wife of the young emperor, were compelled to leave Russia in September, 1727, for Beresof, in Siberia. The miserable statesman bore his merited punishment with fortitude, and died two years afterwards, poor and forlorn, in his place of exile.

The young emperor only got rid of one faction to fall beneath the influence of another. The Dolgoruki family now grasped the principal authority of the state, and even contrived to engage the affection of Peter to Catherine, a young lady of that house, to whom he was soon afterwards publicly affianced. It is probable that this attachment hastened the ruin of Prince Mentschikoff; for it was arranged that the coronation should take place early in the following year to that in which he departed for the wastes of Siberia.

The education of Peter had been entrusted to the able Count Ostermann, of whose talents and integrity the illustrious grandfather of the young sovereign had, while on his death-bed, expressed so high an opinion. The count laboured to discharge his high responsibility with that zeal and wisdom which usually characterised him. He led the young sovereign through a course of instruction, consisting chiefly of history, political codes, the rights of magistrates, the relations existing between the ruler and the ruled, international obligations, and military art.

But from these studies Peter was decoyed by the members of the Dolgoruki family, who did not desire him to become personally either very accomplished or powerful. They sought to save him the labour of thinking for himself, by preventing him from acquiring the power of doing so. It was their intention so to train him, that he should lean upon them for support, and that they should transact the affairs of state. With this object they lured him into excesses, especially with regard to the sports of the field, to which he was greatly attached. To such an extent did they induce him to indulge in these exhausting pastimes, that his strength began to sink beneath the fatigues he encountered. In



this condition Peter was attacked by the small-pox, which made hasty ravages in his enfeebled frame, and terminated his life on the 29th of January, 1730.

We are inclined to believe that his death was a fortunate event for Russia. The Dolgoruki belonged to the old nobility, and were prejudiced against the reforms of Peter the Great. Though it is impossible to say, with absolute certainty, what course the czar would have taken, yet the future of this young monarch, had his life been prolonged, may be inferred. The Dolgoruki had obtained his confidence, and he was continually subject to their influence. They still resided at Moscow; and the czar had already expressed an intention of restoring to that city the distinction arising from the imperial residence. This would have been

materially to injure the prospects of St. Petersburg, and to retard the progress of the empire. From this incident, it is to be feared that the errors of the father might have reappeared in the son; and Peter, like Alexis, have striven to overthrow the reforms of their distinguished progenitor. This was no improbable apprehension; though, on the other hand, the young emperor might perhaps, in maturer years, have thrown off the debilitating tutelage to which he was subjected, and been aroused to a just appreciation and a worthy imitation of the virtues of his grandfather. The death of Peter II. was, notwithstanding, much regretted in Russia; and doubtless the more so, from the fact that he was the last male representative of the line of Romanoff.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

ANNA, DUCHESS OF COURLAND, BECOMES EMPRESS; CONDITIONS EXACTED FROM HER; SHE ANNULS THEM; SHE CONFIDES GREAT POWER TO HER FAVOURITE BIREN; RUSSIA PLACES HER CHOSEN CANDIDATE ON THE THRONE OF POLAND DESPITE THE OPPOSITION OF FRANCE; JEALOUSY AND INTRIGUES OF THE LATTER POWER; RUSSIA, IN CONJUNCTION WITH AUSTRIA, WAGES A PROFITLESS WAR AGAINST TURKEY; AUSTRIA MAKES A PRIVATE AND DISHONOURABLE PEACE WITH THE SULTAN; RUSSIA ALSO MAKES PEACE WITH TURKEY; COURT OF THE EMPRESS; SAVAGE AND CAPRICIOUS DESPOTISM OF BIREN; DEATH OF THE EMPRESS ANNA.

RUSSIA was again agitated by the question—"Who should wield the sceptre of the empire?" The Dolgoruki family made a vain and foolish attempt to secure the imperial crown for Catherine, the young lady of their own family, who had been affianced to the late emperor. One of them forged a document, which he pretended to be a will of Peter II., wherein Catherine was named as the successor. With this spurious instrument in one hand, and a drawn sword in the other, the shallow schemer rushed into the hall where the senators were assembled, and shouted, "Long live the empress Dolgoruki!" As he observed nothing but looks of cold and stern reproof upon the faces of those present, he abandoned his fraudulent design, and withdrew the forged will. This baffled attempt, however, eventually brought a heavy penalty upon himself and his family.

The Russian nobles and counsellors re-

solved to be guided, in the matter of succession, by the will of the empress Catherine I. By this it was arranged, that if Peter II. should die without heirs, Anne, Duchess of Holstein (eldest daughter of Peter the Great), and her heirs should succeed, or, on failure of them, the Princess Elizabeth, second daughter of Peter and Catherine. Anne had died two years before in Germany, where she and her husband had retired in consequence of the persecutions to which they were subjected by Mentschikoff. Though Anne had left a young prince, yet as he was a foreigner on the father's side, and the council entertained a great aversion to the introduction of foreigners into the state, they decided that his claim should not be even taken into consideration. As to the Princess Elizabeth, she had no desire to ascend the throne; and notwithstanding some entreaties to that effect, she declined the



sceptre, preferring to resign herself to a private life, in which indolence, sensuality, and piety were incongruously mingled.

It was therefore necessary for the council to look in some other direction in this search for an imperial sovereign. There were other female members of the Romanoff family yet living. The feeble and imbecile Ivan, who during his short life shared the throne with his subsequently illustrious brother, Peter I., had left three daughters. Catherine, the eldest, had been married to, and afterwards separated from, the turbulent Duke of Mecklenburg; the second, Anna, Duchess of Courland, was a widow, residing at Mittau; while the third was unmarried, and had made St. Petersburg her home. Of these three princesses, the council resolved to offer the throne to the second, Anna of Courland. This council was a body established by Catherine, with the assumed object of offering advice to the sovereign; but it soon proved itself to be both intriguing and despotic. Its members now hoped to obtain an empress who should be their instrument, and permit them to enjoy, in fact, the power which they intended her to possess only in name. With this object they drew up the following conditions, which, if carried into operation, would have materially diminished the imperial power; and, in fact, changed it from an absolute into a limited, and, in some respects, constitutional monarchy:—"That the empress should govern solely by the resolves of the high privy council; that she was not, of herself, to declare war or to conclude peace; that she should not, of her own authority, impose any new tax upon the people; that she should not dispose of any important office, or inflict capital punishment on any nobleman, or confiscate his estates, unless he had been previously convicted of the crime laid to his charge; that she should not alienate any lands belonging to the crown; and that she should not marry, or nominate an heir, without first obtaining the consent of the council." Another stipulation was added, to the effect that her chamberlain and favourite, Ernest Von Biren, should not accompany her into Russia.

These conditions were not intended to soften the rigour of the government with respect to the people, but merely to convert an unlimited monarchy to an irresponsible oligarchy. This aim was soon understood by the great body of the nobles

who did not form a part of the council of seven. They saw, also, that the Dolgoruki had the chief voice in the council, and they resolved not to permit their interests, and those of the empire, to be sacrificed to a family compact. A rapid reaction took place, in which the army and the people sided with the nobles against the restrictive conditions; and declared that they would rather have one master than seven. The Princess Anna, however, accepted the conditions; for General Yagujinski had sent a secret message to her, advising her to do so, and assuring her that means would soon be found for having them annulled.

Anna speedily arrived at Moscow, bringing with her her obnoxious favourite, Biren; by which circumstance she broke the conditions on the very moment of her appearance. Had the council been strong enough to insist on the instant expulsion of the low-born adventurer, and either to dismiss or awe the guards who were opposed to their views, they might, at least for a time, have exercised the imperial power. But, as they were unable to do this, their overwhelming influence, and consequently that of the Dolgoruki, was doomed. The downfall of the usurping oligarchy was a rapid one. Scarcely had Anna passed through the ceremony of coronation, before a petition, signed by several hundred noblemen, was presented to her, entreating her to abolish the restrictions placed upon her authority by the council, and to assume the unlimited power that had been exercised by her predecessors. The empress understood the proceeding, and called an assembly of the deputies and representatives of the nobles and the army. Presenting herself before them, she caused the conditions to be read, and then desired to know whether they were in accordance with their desires. The great majority of those present responded in the negative, and demanded the restoration of the old form of government. Anna expressed great surprise that the conditions forced upon her were so opposed to the wishes of the Russian people; and taking the objectionable document, she tore it to pieces before the assembly, saying, "Then there is no further need of this paper." Shortly afterwards a proclamation was issued, which declared that the empress ascended the throne not by election but by hereditary right, and exacted an oath of allegiance to her as unlimited sovereign.

The first use the empress made of her



unfettered authority was to abuse it, by raising her unworthy favourite, Biren, to the post of grand chamberlain, and confiding to his hands the chief power of the state. This man was the grandson of a groom; but having contrived to ingratiate himself with Anna's master of the household when she was Duchess of Courland, he obtained a position near her person. His handsome figure and polite address attracted her attention, and she made him her secretary and chief favourite. Biren soon acquired an unbounded influence over her mind, and became, in fact, an absolute tyrant to his mistress.

Anna abolished the council of seven, and resigned herself to the directions of a cabinet composed of Biren, Count Ostermann, and General Munich. Ostermann was the presumed head of this cabinet; and Munich, a soldier of great ability, was appointed generalissimo of the army. The favourite behaved with courtesy to these two able men; for he was aware that his own abilities were not of a character to enable him successfully to direct the affairs of a great empire. The latent ambition, insolence, and cruelty of this man's nature, were not yet fully developed: for a time he acted with discretion; and the first three years of the new reign were regarded as those of a mild sovereign, who justly enjoyed the attachment of her people. Anna admired the wisdom of Peter the Great, and desired, as far as her capacity permitted her, to follow in his footsteps. In this temper she encouraged the military reforms of Marshal Munich, who completely remodelled the army; and, amongst other valuable alterations, placed the emoluments of Russian officers on an equality with those of foreigners, which had hitherto been double, and thus proved an incessant source of enmity and discontent. He established a corps of engineers, which, until that time, was unknown in Russia; and founded a military institution for the instruction of cadets of noble families, with a view to the formation of a body of able commanders.

Poland was still convulsed by the struggles of rival candidates for the throne; and these were of a kind that threatened not only to disturb the peace of Russia, but that of France and Sweden also. The Russian cabinet still maintained the cause of Augustus, the elector of Saxony, whom Peter the Great had placed upon the throne of Poland, which France desired to see in the

possession of Stanislaus Leczinski, the father-in-law of Louis XV. But the influence of Russia over Poland was greater than that of France, and Stanislaus was compelled to fly the country and abandon the throne to his more fortunate rival. This circumstance excited a sense of irritation on the part of France against Russia; added to which, she had other cogent reasons for desiring to restrain the still increasing power of that empire. France had long desired to place on the throne of Poland a monarch who should be the instrument of her will; and, although hitherto baffled, she yet trusted ultimately to accomplish her design. Besides, the French government were jealous of the rise of so powerful an empire as Russia, which threatened to surmount and destroy the influence they had hitherto exercised over a considerable part of Europe. Actuated by these motives, France stirred up Sweden—yet bleeding from her recent wounds—against Russia, to which the people of that despoiled and humiliated country entertained emotions of the bitterest hatred. So successful were the diplomatic arts of the French court, that Russia was compelled vigilantly to watch the movements of a dangerous neighbour.

Frederic Augustus died in the February of 1733, after a reign which had been one prolonged scene of misery to the Polish people. The philosophical Stanislaus, then residing at the peaceful court of Lorraine, was reluctantly induced by the French court to proceed to Warsaw, where he was received with acclamation; while in the diet of election, 60,000 voices pronounced him king of Poland. But Russia, backed by the power of Austria, declared in favour of the son of the late king, and arbitrarily interfered to displace a sovereign who was the choice of the majority of his people. A Russian army, consisting of 50,000 men under the command of Marshal Munich, entered Poland; and, under their protection, a party of nobles, opposed to the French interest, proclaimed Frederic Augustus II. as their king. Frederic shortly afterwards entered Cracow in triumph, where he and his queen were crowned. Stanislaus was driven forth as a fugitive, and pursued by the Russian troops to Dantzic, in which town the bravery of the inhabitants enabled him to stand a siege of five months. He relied upon receiving aid from France; but when it arrived, it was too small to render any material service.



The city was at length compelled to capitulate; and then the dethroned Stanislaus stole away in disguise, and after many surprising adventures and escapes, contrived to reach the Prussian territories. The phlegmatic and incapable Frederic Augustus gave himself up entirely to his favourite occupations of smoking and hunting, and scarcely bestowed a thought upon the miserable people whose welfare had been committed to his charge. France was baffled, and Russia triumphant. The empress Anna also received a private gratification, the obtainment of which had been her chief motive for interfering so capriciously in the internal arrangements of another nation. In consequence of the influence thus gained, her favourite, Biren, was shortly afterwards chosen Duke of Courland by the nobles of that duchy; and thus he acquired a distinction which the wealthy and able Mentschikoff had sought for in vain.

The territories which Peter the Great obtained by treaty from Persia, had been found to be a burden rather than an acquisition. The Russian government discovered that it was quite possible to be embarrassed by an extension of the empire in an unprofitable direction. Peter, in his desire to possess, had for once overlooked the necessity of ascertaining whether the new provinces were likely to produce advantages in the way of revenue, or to add strength to the frontiers. To retain the possession of them, it was necessary to keep a considerable garrison in the interior, even in times of peace. These were exposed to frequent attacks and desultory warfare; and the climate was so injurious to the Russians, that they lost, in a few years, no less than 130,000 men. Such a drain as this began to be seriously felt; and Anna wisely resolved on relinquishing her Persian dependencies to the shah on the best terms she could get for them. She therefore opened a negotiation, and proposed to restore the ceded provinces, on condition that the Persian monarch would conclude a commercial treaty of an advantageous kind to the Russians. The offer was accepted; and, in 1735, Anna formally surrendered her Persian territories to the shah. At the same time, the two countries entered into a defensive treaty; Russia being induced to propose this, because she was about to commence a new war with the Turks. Peter I. had himself contemplated such a war, with the object of effacing the

disgrace he had sustained at the Pruth, and of recovering the valuable territory he had been compelled to sacrifice on that occasion. The czar had been further irritated by the haughty refusal of the Porte to acknowledge the imperial title which his people had conferred upon him. As a necessary preparation for his hostile design, he had fortified the Russian frontiers in the direction of Turkey; but his death arrested the execution of his project, which was entirely laid aside by his successors, Catherine and Peter II.

The empress Anna had many inducements to attempt to carry into execution the design of her illustrious predecessor. The Tartars of the Crimea, who were under the protection of the Turks, had for some time made many predatory inroads upon the Russian territory; the loss of Azoff, and the destruction of the fortifications at Taganrog, had the effect of destroying the Russian trade on the Black Sea; the insolence of the Ottoman government also rankled in the minds of the Russian authorities; and, most important with the empress, Biren was anxious for the war. His desire for it has, by some writers, been attributed to a wish to preserve the Russian army in the high state of discipline to which it had been brought; but the suggestion, that it rather arose from a jealousy he entertained towards Marshal Munich, and a hope to send him to a distance, is far more probable.

Anna was further encouraged to hope for success in her intended hostilities against Turkey, in consequence of the treaty of alliance existing between Russia and Austria, by which either nation was to assist the other with 30,000 men against any foe. The first step of the empress was to remonstrate with the sultan on the subject of the ravages made by the Tartars, and to demand satisfaction. As was anticipated, the sultan declined to interfere, and excused himself from doing so on the pretence, that although the Tartars were under his protection, yet that it was impossible to keep these predatory people under the desired restraint. This was what was desired, because, as the sultan refused satisfaction, the Russians had a pretext for endeavouring to obtain it for themselves.

Before the year 1735 had expired, a Russian army marched into the Crimea, where they overrun a part of the country, and slew a great number of the Tartars. Their success led them to penetrate further than



was prudent; where, from want of provisions and incessant attacks, they experienced a loss of 10,000 men, and were compelled to retire.

Notwithstanding this reverse, Marshal Munich, at the head of a powerful army, scoured the Ukraine, and entered the Crimea in the following year (1736), with a free commission to retaliate upon the Tartars. The latter, unable to compete with the now disciplined Russians in the open field, fled before them, and took refuge behind some formidable intrenchments they had erected, and which extended from the Sea of Azoff to the Euxine. As these lines had been raised to protect the Crimea from any attack on the land side, and were strongly fortified with cannon, the Tartars regarded them as impregnable. This illusion was soon dispelled. The impetuosity of the Russian troops enabled them to burst through the intrenchments, and to slay or scatter the hordes that defended them. But a short time elapsed before a great part of the Crimea was in the hands of the victors. The Russians could not retain what they had seized so rapidly. The Tartars, as they fled, devastated the country they passed through, and the Russians again began to feel the difficulty of obtaining provisions. Marshal Munich, therefore, found it necessary to return to the Ukraine, where he took up his winter quarters.

During the expedition of Munich to the Crimea, General Lascy had proceeded with another army against Azoff, to which he laid siege, and reduced to submission on the 1st of July. The Porte was roused from a contemptuous apathy, and compelled to employ some measures to arrest the progress of the Russian arms. Not desirous of entering on a war with a powerful enemy, the sultan endeavoured to enlist the mediation of Austria for the restoration of peace. Russia, however, was not disposed to listen to pacific overtures, and therefore demanded the fulfilment of the treaty existing between her and Austria, by which the latter power was bound to furnish 30,000 men to fight against the Turks. Austria was unwilling to supply a contingent which would have the effect of enabling Russia to extend its conquests without the production of any advantages to herself. She therefore decided on making war on the Turks, in alliance with Russia; as a result of which arrangement, any conquests would have to be divided between the victors.

Though such a formidable alliance necessarily imperilled the safety of Turkey, the sultan felt that it must be resolutely encountered for the maintenance of the honour of the Ottoman empire. He therefore raised new levies, put his army on a war footing, and equipped a fleet for the protection of the Black Sea.

The Russian and Austrian forces entered on their campaign against Turkey in the year 1737, but the efficiency of it was marred by the jealousies and dissensions existing between the respective commanders and officers of these novel allies. The Russian army was divided into two portions, one of which, under the command of General Lascy, again penetrated into and desolated a portion of the Crimea. The other was led by Marshal Munich, who carried his aversion to the Austrians to such a dangerous extreme, that he stood almost aloof from active proceedings; and, although Russia lost about 50,000 soldiers during this campaign, yet all that she obtained in recompense was the fortress of Otchakoff, on the Black Sea. The condition of the Austrian army was worse; for, besides encountering severe losses, it scarcely escaped untouched by disgrace. The Turks poured out their strength against the German army, broke through its ranks on several occasions, and obtained many advantages.

Some attempts were made to bring about a peace; but the Turks, encouraged by the results of the campaign of 1737, took so high a tone, that the war was resumed, though with very little animation on the part of Austria. During 1738, Marshal Munich seemed anxious to redeem his reputation; but, with the exception of some vigorous marches through the territories of the Tartars, he effected nothing of any importance. General Lascy was not more fortunate in the Crimea, where he found the country desolated in every direction as he approached; and his troops suffered from a terrible mortality, which thinned their ranks with a far greater rapidity than the swords of the enemy could have done, and at length compelled them to retire.

The campaign of 1739 opened more favourably for the Russians. Marshal Munich, with a larger army than before, penetrated into Moldavia, where he engaged and entirely defeated an army of Turks and Tartars, capturing forty pieces of cannon, and the whole camp of the enemy. The fortress of Khotzim surrendered on the approach of



the Russians, who also made themselves masters of Jassy, the capital of Moldavia, the whole of which territory was awed by the terror of their arms. Returning into Bessarabia, Munich then prepared for a descent upon Bender, when his further progress was arrested by the intense disgust he experienced on learning that Austria had concluded a separate peace with the Turks, and dishonourably left Russia to carry on the war alone.

Jealous of the triumphs reaped by their rivals, and suffering from a contagious disease, which tended greatly to paralyse their activity, the Austrian troops were heartily tired of the war. At the same time the emperor, Charles VI., was suffering from a dangerous illness; and his daughter, shrinking with apprehension from the future, was anxious by any means to make peace with Turkey. Proposals were therefore made by Austria, which the sultan was glad to accept, and a treaty of peace between them was hurriedly drawn up, and signed at Belgrade on the 1st of September, 1739. By this disgraceful treaty, Austria escaped from all further responsibility in the war; but she purchased peace at a price which, but a short time before, would have been regarded as incredible. Austria restored to Turkey Belgrade, Shabatz, the whole of Servia, a portion of Bosnia, and Austrian Wallachia. It has been remarked, that "the infatuation which tempted Austria into this step, can be referred only to her jealousy of Russian aggrandisement. She desired, above all things, to embarrass that power, whose ambition, stretching to all points, appeared to be boundless. Had she, however, preserved her good faith with Russia, she might have shared in the spoils which she feared her growing rival would monopolise, and partitioned with the empress the fields of their mutual victories. But it was fortunate, perhaps, that the jealousies of the Austrian army, and the timidity of the court, led to this unexpected result; for, had the combining powers prosecuted their design with unanimity, they might have ultimately established a league subversive of the repose and independence of the rest of Europe."

Russia did not feel inclined to carry on the war alone against the formidable power of the Porte, the more especially as she feared that while her armies were engaged with Turkey, she might be exposed to an attack from Sweden, which was secretly

urged to that course by the French court; Russia therefore followed the example of Austria, and that, too, with such promptness, that by the 18th of September, she too had concluded a peace with Turkey. Though the conditions of this treaty involved some sacrifices on both sides, yet, as a whole, they were highly favourable to the sultan. Azoff and the territory surrounding it, together with Kabardia, were to be abandoned, and remain uncultivated, as a neutral boundary between the two empires. It was settled that Russia should be allowed to erect a fortress on the Don, and Turkey another in the Kuban. The Russians also surrendered some minor conquests, and consented to the exclusion of their fleets from the Palus Mæotis and the Black Sea; and to the irritating condition that all their commerce in the latter should be carried on in Turkish ships. Such was the abrupt and disastrous termination of a war which had cost the Russian empire upwards of 100,000 men, and an enormous expenditure of money. All that Russia gained was an increase of reputation for her troops, who, under the improved discipline to which they had been subjected by Marshal Munich, had become both efficient in attack and enduring in suffering. The Turkish government supposed the Russian soldiers had degenerated during the interval of peace that had elapsed since the death of Peter I.; but they now admitted that the Russians were not baffled by the superior courage or skill of the Turkish troops, but by excessive fatigues, want of provisions, and exposure to a climate altogether unsuited to them.

The restoration of peace enabled the empress to pay more attention to those internal reforms, in the carrying out of which she strove to imitate the example of Peter the Great. The canal from the Lake of Ladoga, designed to facilitate the transport of provisions to St. Petersburg, was finished in the year 1738. Anna also dispatched an expedition from Kamschatka towards the north, with the object of discovering whether Siberia was connected with North America. She attracted to Russia great numbers of artisans, who were skilful in such trades and arts as her people were most ignorant of. She also entered into a commercial treaty with England, with the object of furthering this view; and by obtaining the submission of the Kirghises, a wandering tribe on the borders of China,



extended her commercial intercourse with that ancient empire.

The empress, during her residence in Courland, had imbibed tastes of a character more refined than those which prevailed at the yet uncouth Russian court. The social improvement introduced by Peter, though not of a very exalted kind, had not altogether superseded the barbarous old customs. Drunkenness, even amongst the highest aristocracy, including the female members of it, was still not unfrequent, and the revels of the palace frequently degenerated into coarse and offensive orgies. Indeed, traces of the grossest barbarism continually mingled with the greatest splendour and the most immeasurable extravagance. Anna was greatly averse to this vulgar rioting; and with the natural emulation of a woman in matters of ceremonial observance, she entertained the ambition of making her court the most brilliant in Europe. By fostering music, dancing, the courtesies inseparable from intellectual intercourse, and the tranquil pleasures of social life, she diffused a somewhat softer tone of society around her, and contrived to curb the boisterous and licentious amusements in which the Russian nobles had hitherto indulged. Yet social improvement is necessarily a matter of slow growth; it cannot be raised suddenly; and it is not until past barbarism slowly perishes and moulders away, that the gracefulness of refined manners, and that high tone of courtesy and honourable feeling which prevails in the best society, can effectually take its place. This it requires the lapse of more than one generation to accomplish; and therefore it is not surprising that it should have been said, that the empress only succeeded in gathering around her an incongruous display of profusion without elegance, finery without taste, and pomp sometimes without even personal cleanliness. Gross gluttony and drunkenness disappeared from her court; but dissipation of every other kind, ruinous gambling, and uncouth extravagance, supplied their places, and rioted without any check except that which nature ever lays on vice.

Even the empress Anna herself was deficient in that refinement of mind which is almost invariably exhibited by ladies occupying positions of exalted rank in these days. A sense of humanity is the basis of the highest courtesy; and the empress, during the latter part of her reign, suffi-

ciently showed that she was not influenced by any active emotions of benevolence. This was sometimes even perceptible in her amusements. She preserved the ancient custom of keeping buffoons, and had six attached to her household. Some of these were men of high rank, who were condemned to the exercise of a feigned mirth and folly, as the expiation of some real or presumed offence. If these victims of a capricious tyranny, overcome by some recollection of their past dignity, refused to perform the fooleries that were required of them, they were sometimes severely beaten, with the object of stimulating their wit, and dispelling their melancholy or unwillingness.

Prince Galitzin, for having changed his religion, was punished by being deprived of his rank, and reduced to the position of a buffoon. In his case, the degradation was made the more bitter by the coarse and eccentric cruelty with which it was accompanied. As he had lost his wife, the empress commanded him to be married to a girl of the lowest birth; and herself sanctioned, if she did not devise, the extravagances attending the wedding. Though it took place in a winter of more than customary severity, yet a house, built entirely of ice, was prepared for the reception of the married couple. The furniture, even to the nuptial bedstead, was composed of the same frozen material. Four cannons and two mortars of ice were also placed in front of the house, and fired several times without bursting. The governors of all the provinces in the empire were commanded to send some persons of both sexes, chosen from all the nations subject to Russia, and dressed in the costume of their respective countries. The procession, consisting of more than 300 persons, passed before the imperial palace, and through the principal streets of the city. The unfortunate prince and his bride were placed in a great cage on the back of an elephant. Some of the guests were mounted on camels, while others were drawn in sledges by reindeer, dogs, oxen, goats, pigs, and other animals. At the dinner, which had been prepared for the guests, each of them were treated to their food cooked in the manner which prevailed in their own country. A ball followed, at which the representatives of each nation had their own music and their own style of dancing. All this practical joking, though low and foolish, need not ex-



cite censure, if the object of the merriment had not been to heap degradation on a victim of intolerant and unjust legislation. But the conclusion of this proceeding was both offensive and cruel. The degraded prince and his bride were conducted to the ice-house, and with derisive ceremoniousness shown to the frozen bed; and in this dismal place they were compelled to pass the night, though their lives might have paid the penalty of exposure to so much cold in such a climate. It was also during the reign of this princess, who has been commended for her gentleness, that a Russian nobleman who had embraced Judaism, was burnt at the stake with a gag in his mouth, along with the wretched Jew who had been the means of his conversion.

Indeed, the latter part of the reign of the empress Anna was a period of terror, in consequence of the savage and furious despotism which she permitted her favourite, Biren, to exercise. Such was his influence over the empress, that it is affirmed, that though she often fell on her knees before him in the hope of moving him to clemency, yet that both her entreaties and tears were alike unavailing. After the first three years of Anna's reign, the dictatorial temper of this low and bad man broke out into the excesses to which he afterwards gave himself up without restraint. So vindictive was he, and to such an extreme was his tyranny carried, that it diffused terror throughout the empire. On the disgrace of the Dolgoruki family, they were banished; but the bitter hate of Biren pursued them even in the sad loneliness of their exile. To satisfy his revengeful nature they were recalled, and then accused of forging the pretended will (to which we have already alluded) of Peter I., in favour of Catherine Dolgoruki; and also of a conspiracy, with the object of placing the Princess Elizabeth, daughter of the last-named monarch, on the throne. Being found guilty, some of the family were beheaded, and two unhappy members of it broken upon the wheel. Biren brooked no opposition, and regarded it as an unforgivable offence. In the year 1740, a cabinet minister named Boluinski, ventured, at a council in which Biren took the part of the Poles, to observe sarcastically, that as he was not a vassal of Poland, he did not think himself obliged to defend the cause of the enemies of Russia. Biren felt that this remark was directed against him, as holding from Poland the fief of Courland,

the dukedom of which his mistress had procured for him. In retaliation he brought a number of petty charges against Boluinski, one of which was, that he had dared to present a Russian translation of Machiavelli's *Prince* to the empress. Such was the influence of Biren, that he procured the record of a sentence of death against the minister. The empress justly refused to confirm the warrant for the execution, and burst into tears when it was repeatedly brought for her signature. Biren at length obtained it by a threat, that if it was longer withheld he would leave Russia for ever. The weak empress granted it with many tears, and the upright Boluinski perished on the scaffold.

By this exhibition of reckless vindictiveness, Biren crushed any opposition that might have been offered to him in the cabinet. Abandoning himself, therefore, to extravagance and tyranny, he became so grasping, and accumulated so much treasure in his own coffers, that the plundered revenues of the state were insufficient to support the requisite expenditure; and taxes were collected by the most violent means. Soldiers were directed, instead of receiving pay, to live at free quarters. Whole villages were laid waste; many were burned, and the inhabitants sent to Siberia. It is estimated that, during the period of Biren's authority, no less than 20,000 persons were driven into this species of exile. This came even to be regarded almost as a mild punishment: many unfortunate persons who incurred the anger of the savage favourite were punished with the knout; numbers had their tongues cut out; many perished beneath the axe of the executioner; and not a few were broken on the wheel. The number of persons put to death in consequence of the tyranny of this monster is computed at 11,000.

The empress was distressed at the perpetration of the cruelty which she was weak and wicked enough to permit to be transacted in her name. It is said that her conscience was wounded by the death, or rather murder, of Boluinski, whom she much respected, knew to be innocent, and yet sacrificed to the malice of the incarnate fiend who, through the instrumentality of a coarsely sensual affection, had obtained such a tyrannous influence over her. It is supposed that her remorse at the sacrifice of Boluinski was so acute, as to bring her to the grave. She died at St. Petersburg,



on the 29th of October, 1740, in the forty-seventh year of her age, and the tenth of her reign. Shortly before she expired she bequeathed the crown, by the advice of Biren, to the infant prince, Ivan, the grandson of her elder sister Catherine, and son of the Princess Anne and Ulric, Duke of Brunswick. The little prince had been born only in the August preceding, and Biren directed the dying empress to nominate him, instead of his mother, to the imperial crown, because he calculated that, under those circumstances, there must in-

evitably follow a long minority, during which, by the will of the empress, he was to act as regent and guardian of the prince; in case of whose death he might, perhaps, be enabled to mount the throne himself. This gorgeous day-dream, promising as it seemed, was not to be fulfilled; the long-silent but unresting spirit of retribution was at work; the clouds were gathering around the ferocious and insolent man who grasped the executive power of the empire, and the storm was ready to burst over his head.

---

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

BIREN ASSUMES THE REGENCY DURING THE MINORITY OF IVAN; FALL OF BIREN, AND EXALTATION OF THE PRINCESS ANNE TO THE REGENCY; WAR WITH SWEDEN; CONSPIRACY TO RAISE THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH TO THE THRONE; OVERTHROW OF THE REGENT ANNE AND THE INFANT EMPEROR; ELIZABETH PROCLAIMED EMPRESS.

IVAN, the infant to whom the empress Anna had bequeathed the imperial sceptre, was but two months old. The ambitious Biren had attempted to prevent the marriage of the father and mother of this unfortunate babe—the Princess Anne and Ulric, Duke of Brunswick; but as he failed in this, his next object was to derive advantage from it, by persuading the empress to nominate the new-born Ivan as her successor, instead of his mother (the daughter of Anna's elder sister Catherine, and granddaughter of the imbecile Ivan, elder brother of Peter I.), through whom he derived such imperfect right as he possessed.

The father and mother were the natural protectors of the baby emperor, and should have been chosen to act together as a joint regency; but, as we have mentioned, the crafty Biren had induced his dotting mistress, the late empress, to appoint him regent during the minority of Ivan. By the will of Anna it was further arranged, that if the young emperor died before attaining his seventeenth year, Biren should continue guardian to his brethren born after him, who should succeed him on the throne; but in the event of none of them surviving, then the regent, with the concurrence of the state, was to elect and confirm a new

emperor, as unlimited monarch. This opened up a brilliant view to the ambitious Biren, who immediately assumed the title of "his highness, regent of the Russian empire;" laid his grasping hand upon the revenues of the state, and resolved to uphold, by the exercise of despotic cruelty, that dazzling position which he had acquired by fraud.

The Russian nobles and people were irritated at this assumption on the part of a foreigner; discontent became general, and a large party was formed against the tyrannical upstart. Biren endeavoured to awe his opponents into passive submission by an exhibition of the most savage and wanton cruelty. He had a legion of spies under his direction; and all who were detected in any act adverse to his government were exiled to Siberia, cast into dungeons, or tortured with the knout. Such was his vindictiveness, that he was dreaded as much as he was detested. But now that the protecting hand of the empress was removed, his ruin was even more rapid than could have been anticipated. A cabal was secretly formed against him, and Marshal Munich, whom he had offended, took the lead in it. Measures were concerted for the arrest of the regent, and he was seized in his house, during the night, by a detachment of the



guards. The following morning Anne was acknowledged by the senate as grand-duchess of Russia, and guardian of her son the infant emperor. Thus, within a month after the death of the empress Anna, Biren fell from power, and not a hand was raised in his defence. The wretch had made himself so detested, that scarcely a Russian existed who did not rejoice in his ruin. One of the conspirators observed, that the secret means by which the arrest was accomplished were quite unnecessary, for that Biren might just as safely have been publicly arrested in open day. Hurried from his bed to the castle of Schlusselfurg as a prisoner, he was afterwards placed on his trial on the charges of having improperly obtained the regency; of having squandered the imperial treasures, treated the parents of the emperor with contumely, and violated the statutes and ordinances of the empire. Being found guilty, he received sentence of death, which, by an undeserved lenity, was mitigated to exile for life to Siberia. Thus he shared the fate to which he had consigned many thousands of his victims, to whose vengeance it is surprising he did not fall a sacrifice. Yet, strange to say, he was afterwards restored to liberty by Peter III.; while Catherine II. gave back to him the duchy of Courland.

Biren was arrested on the 28th of November, 1740, and the Princess Anne became regent; yet, within a year and a few days, power had passed from her hands also; and she, her husband and her child, were numbered among the ranks of the obscure and the unfortunate!

Anne commenced with the sad mistake of placing the duke, her husband, at the head of the army, instead of Marshal Munich. The latter was naturally very discontented; and, to appease him, she removed Count Ostermann, and made Munich first minister in his place. This was a second error, by which the services of another able man were lost, and a new enemy created. Duke Ulric was devoted to the interests of Austria; and Munich detested Austria, and desired to enter into a close alliance with Prussia: therefore dissensions arose between them; and when the veteran soldier (in March, 1741) tendered his resignation, it was accepted. Thus Anne thoughtlessly threw away the second great support of her regency.

In the August following, Sweden declared war against Russia—a proceeding to

which it was incited by the court of France, and by a belief that the Russians themselves, discontented with their government, were ripe for revolution. Notwithstanding all that the Swedes had suffered at the hands of the Russians during the time of Peter I., they were so confident of success, that before a sword was drawn or shot fired, they drew up the articles on which they would grant peace to the enemy, who, they concluded, would be ready to accept the terms they were prepared to impose. Russia, they presumed, should be compelled to surrender Carelia, Ingria, and Livonia; that she should not be allowed to keep any vessels on the Livonian or Esthonian coasts; and that she should be made to grant the free importation of corn. To enforce these extravagant ideas, Sweden had an empty treasury, a fleet not seaworthy, and an army clamorous for pay, and almost destitute of provisions. But the Swedish government trusted to enlist on its side the antipathy which the Russian people entertained towards foreigners. With this object it issued a manifesto, which thus appealed to the emotions of nationality of the Russian population:—"The sole intention, on the part of Sweden, is to defend herself by arms against the oppressions exercised against her by the arrogant foreigners, the ministers of the Russian court; and at the same time to deliver the Russian nation from the yoke which these ministers have imposed on it, by assisting the Russians to regain their right of electing for themselves a lawful ruler." This document, peculiarly calculated to arouse a sensitive people, either was unable to overcome the stolid apathy of the Russians and their indifference to liberty, or it was counteracted by a national jealousy at the interference of other countries in their affairs. At any rate, it fell perfectly harmless—was disseminated and forgotten.

Notwithstanding the discord that prevailed in the Russian cabinet, the forces of the empire anticipated the efforts of the Swedes; and General Lascey, advancing against the Swedish army, which was encamped under Wrangel, near Vilmanstrand, attacked and defeated it on the 3rd of September, 1741. The fortress of the place immediately surrendered to the Russians; but the latter were compelled to withdraw on the approach of winter, in consequence of the rapid reinforcements of the Swedes.

Before the next campaign a new change



had been effected in the government of Russia; but it was not accomplished by the people, but by a court faction. The Russian populace felt no attachment to the infant emperor, whose father was a German; or to his mother, who, though descended from a member of the house of Romanoff, was yet the daughter of a German prince. A jealousy of German influence already existed among the Russian nobles; but had the regent been a woman of enlarged understanding, she would have succeeded in reconciling them to the sway of her family. But the conduct of the Princess Anne was such, that the people had nothing to divert them from the fact, that neither she nor her son were true Russians. She was a woman whose mildness of temper merged into apathy. Once installed as regent, she neglected the duties of her high position, and allowed them to be performed by the advisers of her husband, from whom, nevertheless, she seemed almost estranged. She created great dissatisfaction by withdrawing for weeks from public affairs, and shutting herself up with a Countess Mengden, who had obtained a remarkable ascendancy over her. The aversion which the Russians entertained towards foreigners broke out with increased violence, and complaints were made by the disappointed nobles, that the administration of affairs had passed altogether out of the hands of their countrymen. When the indolence of the regent permitted her to display her inclinations, they were found to tend to a discouragement of Russian customs, and a lavish patronage of foreigners.

Under these circumstances, some eyes were again turned towards the Princess Elizabeth, the surviving daughter of Peter the Great. She was Russian by birth; regarded as national in her habits and ideas; nearer by blood to the throne than the infant Ivan; and the immediate descendant of an illustrious and popular sovereign. Yet she had lived so retired a life, that she was without a party in the country, and her friends were few in number. Indeed, so limited were they, that the chief agent in the conspiracy which was set on foot in her favour, was her French physician, Lestocq; and the money required to conduct it, was supplied by the Marquis la Chetardie, which, at the direction of his government, he gave with the object of distracting Russia with internal commotions.

Elizabeth, during her previous life, ap-

peared to be devoid of ambition; and she had even refused the imperial sceptre. Occupied by her amours and her devotions, she either did, or at least seemed to, prefer the irresponsibility of a private station to the gorgeous uncertainty of a throne in a great but unsettled empire. While the empress Anna occupied the throne, Elizabeth was indifferent to politics, and avoided the society of the statesmen of the day. The empress reposed in her a confidence which appears not to have been misplaced. But when Elizabeth beheld an infant emperor consigned to the regency of an unprincipled and cruel foreigner, the small amount of ambition existing in her, and which had hitherto remained latent, became aroused. It was not checked by the ruin of Biren; for then the guardianship of the baby-czar was transferred to its parents, of whom the father was a German by birth, and the mother by descent. Elizabeth was doubtless further stimulated to the adoption of the course which had been suggested to her, by the rumour that the Princess Anne (the mother of the infant Ivan) intended to cause herself to be proclaimed empress, and to establish the succession in the line of her daughters.

Elizabeth was without a party, but she was the representative of a principle—that which, springing from the nationality of the people, demanded that the sovereign should be a native of the empire he ruled. Lestocq (Elizabeth's physician), Grimstein, a corporal, and Schwartz, a trumpeter, were the active agents of the conspiracy in her favour. The latter two were instrumental in gaining over to Lestocq's purpose a strong party of the guards; the French Marquis la Chetardie, as we have said, supplying the money required to bribe the latter. The means appeared strangely insufficient for the end proposed; and Elizabeth, influenced by a natural timidity, hesitated and shrunk back from the dangers which stood between her and the imperial sceptre. Delays thus arose, and rumours were spread abroad concerning the existence of the plot. Count Ostermann warned the regent Anne of her danger, who received similar instructions from the English and Austrian ambassadors. Anne was incredulous, and would not take any step to frustrate the design of those who were preparing for her overthrow. Her indolent and unsuspecting nature was not even aroused by her receiving an anonymous letter, denounc-



ing the conspirators. Instead of causing them to be instantly arrested, she merely read the letter before her court, and in the presence of Elizabeth, who, bursting into a flood of tears, asserted her innocence with such an appearance of sincerity, that the regent was satisfied, and made no further inquiry.

Lestocq saw that unless the conspiracy was put into instant practice, failure and ruin would be inevitable. He therefore urged Elizabeth to fix the following night for the execution of the scheme, which, if successful, was to place her on the throne. She still hesitated, when he drew from his pocket a card, on one side of which was a representation of herself, in the costume of a nun, while the reverse bore a portrayal of her wearing the imperial crown. He then demanded which fate she preferred, and added that the choice depended entirely upon herself, and the promptitude, or otherwise, with which she then acted. This argument was conclusive, and Elizabeth consented to fulfil her part in the plot, which was to be carried into execution on the following night, the 5th of December, 1741.

At the appointed hour, having first made a vow before the crucifix that no blood should be shed in the attempt, Elizabeth entered a sledge, attended by Lestocq and her chamberlain, and drove to the barracks of the guards. On arriving there she advanced amongst the soldiers with the cross in her hand, and addressed them at some length, stating her claims to the throne, reminding them that she was the daughter of their great emperor Peter, that she had been illegally deprived of the succession, that an infant of foreign birth had been placed upon the throne, and that native Russians were excluded from the highest offices of the state, which were conferred alone on foreigners. Elizabeth was well known to the guards, and a great favourite with them. They had been extensively bribed, and intoxicating liquors were distributed freely amongst them. The result was, that the great majority responded to the address with enthusiasm, and placed in confinement those who adhered to their duty. Then, with the Princess Elizabeth and her attendants, they marched to the palace, where the regent, her husband, and her infant son resided. Seizing the sentries at the gates, they rushed into the sleeping apartments of the regent and her family, and dragging

them out of their beds, scarcely allowed them time to dress before they were hurried away as prisoners to the palace of Elizabeth. The infant emperor, when roused from sleep, on hearing the shouts of the soldiers in front of the palace, clapped his little hands, and endeavoured to imitate their vociferations. Elizabeth was touched, and exclaimed, "Poor babe! thou knowest not that thou art joining in the noise that is raised at thy undoing."

During the night, many persons connected with, or supposed to be favourable to, the government of the regent, were arrested, and amongst them Count Ostermann and Marshal Munich. The news spread rapidly through the city; the troops, generally, declared for Elizabeth, and, by eight in the morning, she was proclaimed empress, and the revolution was accomplished. A manifesto was then issued to the people, to explain what had taken place. It contained the following passage:—"The empress Anna having nominated the grandson of her sister, a child born into the world only a few weeks before the empress's death, as successor to the throne; and during the minority of whom various persons had conducted the administration of the empire in a manner highly iniquitous, whence disturbances had arisen both within the country and out of it, and probably, in time, still greater might arise; therefore, all the faithful subjects of Elizabeth, both in spiritual and temporal stations, particularly the regiments of the life-guards, had unanimously invited her, for the prevention of all the mischievous consequences to be apprehended, to take possession of the throne of her father, as nearest by right of birth; and that she had accordingly resolved to yield to this universal request of her faithful subjects, by taking possession of her inheritance derived from her parents, the emperor Peter I. and the empress Catherine."

Thus easily was an unpopular government swept away, and a revolution effected in the succession. Even in the most despotic countries, public opinion is an instrument of remarkable power. Such public opinion as existed in Russia at that period was averse to German influence and a foreign rule, and it welcomed Elizabeth as the representative of a national government. It was only necessary for her, therefore, to grasp the imperial sceptre, and the empire recognised her as its sovereign. As to the



regent Anne and the infant emperor, no weapon was drawn in their favour, no voice raised in their behalf. They passed away like a shadow, and were soon almost as unremembered as they were unregarded. Elizabeth stated that she had sent the Princess Anne and her husband, Duke Ulric, back to their native land; but this was not the truth. They were thrown into captivity, and removed from fortress to fortress at her pleasure or caprice. Their child, the late baby-emperor, was allowed to remain with them until he attained his eighth year, after which he was consigned to solitary confinement; first in the fortress of Oranienburg, and then in that of Schlus-selburg. The consequences of a life of confinement rendered him almost idiotic, and he was eventually murdered, in conformity with a conditional order given by the empress Catherine II., who regarded him as a pretender to the throne whom circumstances might render dangerous.\* The parents of this most unfortunate youth lingered out their lives in captivity; the mother dying after a few years, during childbirth; and the father surviving her, and reaching a sad and embittered age. As to the advisers and friends of the regent and her husband, most of them were exiled to Siberia. Amongst them was the wise statesman Ostermann, and the able general Munich. The latter was, after a mock trial, condemned to death as a traitor; but

\* The following touching account is given of a visit subsequently paid by the emperor, Peter III., to the dungeon of this unhappy prince:—"General Ungern Sternberg was aide-de-camp to Peter III., and accompanied him in a secret visit to the unfortunate Ivan at Schlus-selburg, where he had been confined by Elizabeth. They found this wretched young man in a dungeon, the window of which admitted but a faint gleam of day, the light being intercepted by piles of wood heaped up in the court. He was in a very dirty white jacket, with a pair of old shoes on his feet. His hair was very light, and cut short like that of a Russian slave. He was tolerably well-made, and his complexion had a paleness which showed that the sun had never shone on his face. He was then upwards of twenty, and had been confined ever since he was fourteen months old; but he had received some impressions and ideas which he still retained. Peter III., affected at his condition, put several questions to him; among the rest, 'Who are you?' 'I am the emperor.' 'Who put you into prison, then?' 'Vile, wicked people.' 'Would you like to be emperor again?' 'To be sure; why not. I should then have fine clothes, and servants to wait upon me.' 'But what would you do if you were emperor?' 'I would cut off the heads of all those who have wronged me.' Peter III., having then asked whence he learned what he

Elizabeth commuted his sentence into one of perpetual imprisonment. His captivity was of a mild kind—he being confined in an astrog or prison, of which he himself had drawn the plan, and ordered to be constructed for the reception of Biren, the ferocious favourite of the empress Anna. It was an area about 170 feet square, and enclosed with high palisades. Within was a wooden house, inhabited by himself, his wife, and a few servants; and a small garden, which he cultivated with his own hands. He received a daily allowance of twelve copecks (about sixpence) for the maintenance of himself, his wife, and domestics; which miserable pittance he increased by keeping cows and selling part of their milk, and by instructing lads in geometry and engineering. Strange are the vicissitudes which attended those who, in unsettled times, fulfilled the highest and most responsible offices of the state. In this case, the hand which had forced a king upon Poland, and carried on a fierce war against the might of the Ottoman empire, was employed in tracing mathematical figures for children. It is much to the honour of the veteran soldier, that he bore his misfortunes with tranquillity, and proved himself a moral no less than a military hero. He was ultimately recalled by Peter III., whom, it will be seen, he faithfully served; enjoyed the favour of Catherine II., and died in 1767, in his eighty-fifth year.

told him, he answered, that he had it from the Virgin and the angels; and began to enter into long stories of these pretended visions. Though alone, and confined from his infancy, he did not appear terrified at the sight of the emperor and his officers. He examined his dress and weapons with much curiosity and pleasure, as a bold child would have done. The emperor asked him again what he wished for, and he answered in his vulgar Russian dialect, 'To have more air.' Ungern was left some time at Schlus-selburg to gain his confidence, and find out whether his apparent imbecility were only assumed. He was soon convinced, however, that it was the natural consequence of his mode of life. He gave him, from the emperor, a silk morning gown. Ivan put it on with transports of joy, running about the room, and admiring himself as a savage would have done who had never been dressed before. As all his wishes centred in the requisition of more air, Peter III. sent the plan of a little palace, in the centre of which was to be a garden, with orders to have it built for Ivan in the court of the fortress. It was cruel that this act of humanity towards an innocent man should have served as a pretext against the unfortunate Peter. He was charged with having intended to build a prison for his wife and son, and this was made a pretext for his own assassination."



## CHAPTER XXIX.

CLEMENCY OF THE EMPRESS ELIZABETH AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF HER REIGN; BRIEF WAR WITH SWEDEN; THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR AND ITS ORIGIN; ELIZABETH JOINS A LEAGUE AGAINST FREDERIC OF PRUSSIA; PROGRESS OF THE WAR; THE GRAND-DUKE PETER FEDOROVITCH; HIS MARRIAGE WITH THE PRINCESS SOPHIA AUGUSTA OF ANHALT-ZERBST, AFTERWARDS CATHERINE II.; BATTLE OF KUNERSDORF; ILLNESS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH became possessed of the imperial power on the 6th of December, 1741. Though she punished all who had been instrumental in keeping her from the throne, she liberally rewarded those by whose agency she had been placed there. Lestocq was made head physician of the court, president of the college of the faculty, and privy councillor, with a magnificent income. Grinstein, the corporal, was first created adjutant, and then major-general; and Schwartz, the trumpeter, received the rank of colonel, and a considerable estate. The favourites and paramours of the new empress, who were mostly incapable and vulgar persons, were all handsomely provided for. Rasumoffski, her most favoured admirer, she afterwards privately married; Vorontzoff (whose descendants are generally called Woronzow), another of them, showed a considerable capacity for business, and became vice-chancellor, and finally high chancellor. All the grenadiers who had obtained the smiles of the new empress, received the rank of officers, and were formed into a body-guard, of which she herself became captain. But the conduct of these people was so intolerable, that most of them fell into disgrace and were ruined. Even Lestocq, the physician, in consequence of his avarice and arrogance, was eventually banished. Grinstein shared the same fate; and Schwartz was ordered to retire to his estates.

Elizabeth soon confided the business of the state to those who were able to direct it, instead of to the incompetent crowd of unknown and mostly uneducated persons by whom she was surrounded. The grand-chancellor, Bestuchef, became her chief minister, and the principal affairs of the empire were managed by him. One incident shed a lustre over the advent of Elizabeth's reign, and caused great expectations to be raised of her clemency. She pardoned and liberated more than 20,000 persons who had been banished or imprisoned. Yet, strangely enough, an enormous num-

ber of people were exiled during her sway. This arose from her having made a vow not to sanction the death of any criminal; but this measure, even if wise in itself, was too much in advance of the ideas and habits of the Russian people. The judges, deprived of the power of directly sentencing a malefactor to death, adopted the practice of awarding such severe inflictions of the knout, and other punishments, as amounted to an indirect sentence to that effect; for the sufferer often died, as a result of the merciless chastisement which he had been made to endure. Minor punishments, of a savage and revolting kind, also came much into use; dislocation of the arms, slitting of the tongue, cutting off the ears, and other mutilations, were extremely common under the reign of an empress to whom many have awarded the praise of clemency, but of whom, in justice, scarcely more on this point could be said, than that she was good-tempered to those who had the fortune to please her. When personally offended, she could be both cruel and remorseless. Women, and even ladies of rank, were made to feel the severity of her vengeance, by being condemned to the hideous torture of the knout. Some crude conspiracy, for the purpose of restoring the infant Ivan to the throne, was discovered soon after her accession, and those implicated in it were first punished with the knout, and then exiled to Siberia. Amongst the victims was one of the ladies of the court, whose personal beauty had inspired the empress with feelings of jealous envy, and who thus permitted the law to mangle, and for ever to sweep from her path, both the rebel and the rival.

Through the wisdom of Bestuchef, France soon found herself entirely deceived concerning the advantages she had expected to derive from the revolution which raised Elizabeth to the throne. No national commotion or popular discontent had followed; and the secret cabals of France were met and neutralised by the superior



state-craft of Bestuchef. The French cabinet, however, succeeded in exciting Sweden to a renewal of hostilities with Russia. Frederic I. demanded the restoration of Finland; which, as he must have anticipated, was refused. Hostilities were therefore resumed; but the military glory of Sweden seemed to have departed, and her sons possessed neither the territory, wealth, population, or vigour of former years. Sweden, indeed, suffered from the influence of the gold, as well as the sword, of Russia, and she was slowly sinking into a position not much above that of a province of her great imperial neighbour.

The war recommenced in the spring of 1742. The Russian forces were under the chief command of Marshal Lascy; those of the Swedes were headed by Lewenhaupt and Buddenbrock. The latter, by their want of readiness, betrayed the interests of their country, and sacrificed the fortress of Fredericshaum, together with all their stores and munitions of war; which, in the impaired condition of the Swedish finances, it was impossible to replace. As if labouring under some infatuation, the Swedes left the passage of the Kymene undefended, and retired rapidly to Helsingfors, whither they were pursued by the Russians. The Swedes, imagining themselves secure on account of the woods by which they were surrounded, neglected any further precautions. Under these circumstances, a Finlander who was much incensed against the Swedes, led the Russians to a path cut by Peter I., but since completely overgrown by bushes, which enabled them to surround and cut off their enemies. The Swedish generals, after their troops had suffered a blockade of fourteen days, abandoned them, under pretence of yielding obedience to the commands of the diet. They trusted, through their influence in the council, to evade the penalty of this desertion; but such was the irritation both of their sovereign and their countrymen at their unworthy conduct, that they suffered death for it. Their deserted troops were compelled to conclude a capitulation with the Russians, and the whole of Finland fell into the power of the latter.

The Swedes perceiving that the war was a hopeless struggle, which they had not the means of continuing, endeavoured to conciliate the empress Elizabeth. In order to induce the Russians not to insist on the cession of Finland, they had, at an earlier

period, offered the crown of Sweden to her relative, the young Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, the grandson of Peter the Great, by his favourite daughter Anne Petrovna, who had been married to the Duke of Holstein shortly before the death of her illustrious father. Charles Peter Ulric, the young duke (afterwards the unfortunate Peter III.), declined the offer, in consequence of his having been summoned to Russia by the empress Elizabeth, who announced her intention of making him her successor. Under these circumstances, the Swedes purchased peace from the Russian empress, by adopting a recommendation to elect her relation, the Bishop of Lübeck, as their king; in consequence of which, that prelate ascended the Swedish throne on the death of Frederic I.

The majority of the Swedish people were, however, so dissatisfied with this arrangement, that the peace negotiations were delayed, and, in the year 1743, Russia again resorted to hostilities, and a Russian fleet made some descents upon the coasts of Sweden, though without producing as much effect as was anticipated. In the same year peace was concluded at Abo. Adolphus Frederic, duke of Holstein and bishop of Lübeck, was elected king of Sweden. Finland, then in the possession of the Russian troops, was restored to Sweden, which was only compelled to cede the province of Kymmenegard, together with the branches and mouths of the river Kymene Nyslot, and all the district around it in the province of Savolar. Yet, in accordance with the spirit of Russian policy, which enfeebles that which at some future time it may be necessary to engulf, the Russian troops, before quitting Finland, took care, according to Mannstein, "to squeeze from it everything they possibly could; the intention of the court being to ruin that province totally, and reduce it, notwithstanding the peace, into so wretched a condition as not to be able for a long time to hold up its head again; the generals had even repeated orders not to fail of attending to this point. The empress, however, feigning a desire to restore a good harmony with her neighbours, ordered some thousands of bushels of grain out of the magazines which had been established in Finland, to be distributed to the peasants of that country for sowing their grounds."

Several uneventful years rolled on, and proved barren of incidents of value or interest



to the historian. Elizabeth then engaged in that celebrated struggle known as THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR, which shook and seriously affected the interests of the whole of Europe. A history of it is, in fact, the history of Europe during the period over which it extended. It must be sufficient that we mention the cause from which it arose, and relate the part that Russia took in it. Frederic II. of Prussia, who won from his contemporaries and from posterity the title of "the Great," had wrested Silesia from Maria Theresa, archduchess of Austria, who had succeeded her father, Charles VI., on the imperial throne. "Maria Theresa" (we quote the brilliant language of Macaulay) "had never for a moment forgotten the great wrong which she had received at the hands of Frederic. Young and delicate, just left an orphan, just about to be a mother, she had been compelled to fly from the ancient capital of her race; she had seen her fair inheritance dismembered by robbers, and of those robbers he had been the foremost. Without a pretext, without a provocation, in defiance of the most sacred engagements, he had attacked the helpless ally whom he was bound to defend. The empress-queen had the faults as well as the virtues which are connected with quick sensibility and a high spirit. There was no peril which she was not ready to brave, no calamity which she was not ready to bring on her subjects, or on the whole human race, if only she might once taste the sweetness of a complete revenge. Revenge, too, presented itself, to her narrow and superstitious mind, in the guise of duty. Silesia had been wrested not only from the house of Austria, but from the church of Rome. The conqueror had, indeed, permitted his new subjects to worship God after their own fashion; but this was not enough. To bigotry it seemed an intolerable hardship that the catholic church, having so long enjoyed ascendancy, should be compelled to content itself with equality. Nor was this the only circumstance which led Maria Theresa to regard her enemy as the enemy of God. The profaneness of Frederic's writings and conversation, and the frightful rumours which were circulated respecting the immorality of his private life, naturally shocked a woman who believed with the firmest faith all that her confessor told her; and who, though surrounded by temptations, though young and beautiful, though ardent in all her passions, though possessed

of absolute power, had preserved her fame unsullied even by the breath of slander. To recover Silesia, to humble the dynasty of Hohenzollern to the dust, was the great object of her life. She toiled during many years for this end, with zeal as indefatigable as that which the poet ascribes to the stately goddess who tired out her immortal horses in the work of raising the nations against Troy, and who offered to give up to destruction her darling Sparta and Mycenæ, if only she might once see the smoke going up from the palace of Priam. With even such a spirit did the proud Austrian Juno strive to array against her foe a coalition such as Europe had never seen. Nothing would content her but that the whole civilised world, from the White Sea to the Adriatic, from the Bay of Biscay to the pastures of the wild horses of the Tanais, should be combined in arms against one petty state."

The exertions of Maria Theresa led eventually to a secret alliance against Frederic, and that monarch learned from his agents at foreign courts, that an alarming league was formed for the purpose of ruining him and partitioning his dominions. With this view he was to be attacked at once by Austria, France, Russia, Saxony, and Sweden. "It was not," says the eloquent writer from whom we have just quoted, "to any political theory that the strange coalition between France and Austria owed its origin. The real motive which induced the great continental powers to forget their old animosities and their old state maxims, was personal aversion to the king of Prussia. This feeling was strongest in Maria Theresa; but it was by no means confined to her. Frederic, in some respects a good master, was emphatically a bad neighbour. That he was hard in all dealings, and quick to take all advantages, was not his most odious fault. His bitter and scoffing speech had inflicted keener wounds than his ambition. In his character of wit he was under less restraint than even in his character of ruler. Satirical verses against all the princes and ministers of Europe were ascribed to his pen. In his letters and conversation he alluded to the greatest potentates of the age in terms which would have better suited Collé, in a war of repartee with young Crébillon at Pelletier's table, than a great sovereign speaking of great sovereigns. About women, he was in the habit of expressing himself in a manner which it was impossible for the meekest women to for-



give; and, unfortunately for him, almost the whole continent was then governed by women who were by no means conspicuous for meekness. Maria Theresa herself had not escaped his scurrilous jests. The empress Elizabeth, of Russia, knew that her gallantries afforded him a favourite theme for ribaldry and invective. Madame de Pompadour, who was really the head of the French government, had been even more keenly galled. She had attempted, by the most delicate flattery, to propitiate the king of Prussia; but her messages had drawn from him only dry and sarcastic replies. The empress-queen took a very different course. Though the haughtiest of princesses, though the most austere of matrons, she forgot, in her thirst for revenge, both the dignity of her race and the purity of her character, and condescended to flatter the low-born and low-minded concubine, who, having acquired influence by prostituting herself, retained it by prostituting others. Maria Theresa actually wrote with her own hand a note, full of expressions of esteem and friendship, to her dear cousin, the daughter of the butcher Poisson—the wife of the publican D'Etiolles—the kidnapper of young girls for the harem of an old rake: a strange cousin for the descendant of so many emperors of the West! The mistress was completely gained over, and easily carried her point with Louis, who had, indeed, wrongs of his own to resent. His feelings were not quick; but contempt, says the eastern proverb, pierces even through the shell of the tortoise; and neither prudence nor decorum, had ever restrained Frederic from expressing his measureless contempt for the sloth, the imbecility, and the baseness of Louis. France was thus induced to join the coalition; and the example of France determined the conduct of Sweden, then completely subject to French influence."

The ruin of Frederic was confidently anticipated, and he himself expected no less. Yet he was not dismayed, but acted with that energy which is ever characteristic of great minds. Having resolved to anticipate his enemies, he demanded an explanation from Maria Theresa; and on receiving a haughty and evasive one, he, on the 24th of August, 1756, invaded the rich electorate of Saxony with an army of 60,000 men. Thus commenced "the seven years' war"—a contest the most extraordinary and important in modern times, previous to those of the

French revolution. Frederic defeated Augustus at Pirna, and then captured Dresden, where, among the state papers, he discovered abundant evidence of the secret designs of the coalition against him. Some of these documents he published, and thus showed the statesmen of Europe that, whatever might have been the character of his former proceedings, he was now the injured party, and had merely anticipated a blow intended to destroy him.

It was not Elizabeth's interest to take part against Frederic; but, as has been observed, she was animated by a personal dislike towards him, on account of the satires in which he had indulged respecting her irregularities. Moreover, she professed, and perhaps entertained, a feeling of commiseration for the Polish king, whose Saxon dominions the Prussian monarch treated as a conquered and enslaved province. Another of Elizabeth's reasons for entering on a war which she might wisely have viewed as a spectator, instead of taking part in as a principal, was the prospect of certain ulterior advantages which she hoped to derive with respect to Courland and other Polish provinces.

The second year of the war (1757), Frederic advanced into Bohemia; and, on the 5th of May, gained a great victory over the Austrians, led by Prince Charles of Lorraine and Marshal Brown. Frederic purchased his triumph at the terrible cost of a loss of 18,000 men; but no less than 24,000 of the enemy were killed, wounded, or taken. Part of the defeated army took refuge within the walls of the city. There they were relieved by the approach of another Austrian army under Marshal Daun, who, however, on Frederic's advance to meet him, sheltered his troops within an intrenched camp at Kolin. There he awaited the attack of the Prussians; and on the 18th of June—"a day which, if the Greek superstition still retained its influence, would be held sacred to Nemesis"—Frederic was defeated with a frightful carnage; no less than 13,000 of his soldiers having perished before he could be persuaded to quit the field. Abandoning the siege of Prague, he was compelled to retire hurriedly from Bohemia, and his enemies concluded that his final ruin was at hand. He himself was so depressed, that his health was seriously impaired, and he contemplated suicide as an escape from the heavy troubles which environed him on all sides. He even



carried a certain and speedy poison about his person.

But Frederic never lost his courage or his energy, which enabled him to retrieve his apparently desperate affairs. "At this very time the scanty leisure of the illustrious warrior was employed in producing odes and epistles, a little better than Cibber's, and a little worse than Hayley's." The autumn seemed as if about to bring with it the pall that should cover both the fortune and the life of the heroic Prussian. Silesia was overrun by the Austrians; a great French army, under Marshal Soubise, was advancing from the west; and a Russian army, under Marshal Apraxin, was in the field. Frederic first marched against the French, and, on the 5th of November, obtained a brilliant victory over them at Rosbach. He then marched into Silesia; and, one month after his triumph at Rosbach, defeated 60,000 Austrians under Prince Charles of Lorraine at Breslau. This battle was, in later times, pronounced by the great Napoleon as a masterpiece, and sufficient of itself to entitle Frederic to a place in the first rank amongst generals. The Austrians lost, in killed, wounded, and prisoners, 27,000 men, together with 50 stand of colours, 100 guns, and 4,000 waggons. Silesia was reconquered, and Charles of Lorraine retired to Brussels to hide his shame and sorrow. As for the Russians under Apraxin, they invaded Prussia, took Memel, were guilty of shameful cruelty to the poor inhabitants of the districts through which they passed, and defeated a body of Prussians under the aged field-marshal, Lehwold. But having done this, Apraxin not only omitted to follow up his success, but even retired precipitately across the Russian frontiers.

For this remarkable proceeding there was a double cause. Elizabeth's nephew—the grand-duke Peter, and successor to the imperial throne—entertained a romantic and most extravagant attachment to Frederic, and the Russian officers knew, that to inflict defeat upon the Prussians, was to incur the displeasure of one who, perhaps, at no very remote date, would become their emperor. The other cause of Apraxin's retreat was a secret order from the chief minister, Bestuchef, commanding him to do so. The motive of the chancellor was hatred to the grand-duke Peter, to whom he rightly conjectured this movement, so discreditable to the Russian arms, would be attributed. Bestuchef

was plotting to induce the empress to deprive the grand-duke of the succession; and, as Elizabeth was earnest in the war, it was likely that she would be seriously offended with Peter, to whose secret interference she would attribute the disappointment of her hopes, and the loss of credit by her troops. Bestuchef is also supposed to have expected the death of the empress, and to have desired the presence of the troops for the purpose of effecting the conspiracy by which he hoped to exclude the grand-duke Peter from the throne.

It is here necessary to retrace our steps, and to dwell briefly on the career of this well-meaning, but unwise and unfortunate prince. In 1742, when only in his fourteenth year, he obeyed the summons of the empress Elizabeth, and went to St. Petersburg, where he adopted the Greek form of the Christian religion, and received the name of Peter Fedorovitch. Elizabeth assigned him the palace of Oranienbaum, not far from the capital, where he resided when not at court. The empress—or, more probably, those about her—excluded the young grand-duke from any participation in public affairs. Though his youth and neglected education by no means qualified him to take part in matters of such importance, yet Peter felt a dissatisfaction which he did not care to conceal. He exhibited an aversion to study, and devoted his time chiefly to training some Holstein troops, whom he had obtained permission to keep at Oranienbaum. He had a perfect passion for military exercise; but he gave a preference to the Prussian system over that of Russia; and, indeed, showed plainly enough that all his sympathies were German, and that he held in contempt the people whom he would be called upon to rule. His companions were young German officers—men of low birth and dissipated and sensual habits. In their society Peter indulged, without control, in excessive drinking, smoking, and licentious amours. He was encouraged in this course by Bestuchef, who hated him; and some add, by the empress also, with the view of preventing her successor from acquiring a popularity which might be displeasing to her. It would be difficult to credit this statement if the conduct of Elizabeth did not give it a colouring; for Peter's German partialities and known dislike of all those customs and ideas which Russians regarded as national, had made him more than sufficiently un-



popular for that purpose. The empress appears to have been somewhat attached to him; and, dissipated as she herself was, she endeavoured to withdraw him from his career of thoughtless sensuality, by inducing him to marry. But towards Peter, as in other cases, she exhibited a remarkable capriciousness.\* The lady she selected was Peter's cousin, the Princess Sophia Augusta von Anhalt, daughter of the Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, governor of Stettin, in Prussian Pomerania. The marriage took place in 1745; the lady also being received into the Greek communion, and taking the name of Catherine Alexiewna.

The princess was born on the 2nd of May, 1729, and brought up in the most simple manner by her mother, who was, notwithstanding, a scheming and artful woman. It is said that, in girlhood, good humour, intelligence, and spirit, were the most striking features of the young princess who was afterwards to play so distinguished a part as the imperial ruler of a great people. A lady of quality, who frequently saw her during this phase of life, has left the following sketch concerning her:—"Her deportment, from her earliest years, was always remarkably good: she grew uncommonly handsome, and was a great girl for her years. Her countenance, without being beautiful, was very agreeable; to which the peculiar gaiety and friendliness which she ever displayed gave additional charms. Her education was conducted by her mother alone, who kept her strictly, and never suffered her to show the least symptoms of pride, to which she had some propensity; accustoming her, from her earliest infancy, to salute the ladies of distinction who came to visit the princess, with all the marks of respect that became a child."

\* Tooke observes—"By one of those strange perversions of judgment which often appear in the uncultivated mind, Elizabeth pretended to think that her nephew was too well-informed, and that he was in danger of becoming too amiable by his manners, and too enviable by his knowledge. From the very moment of her choosing him for her successor, she regarded him as a rival. For this reason it probably was that she took him from under the tuition of the enlightened Brummer, who had begun his education in Holstein, and placed about him Tshoglo-koff, a man of mean talents and a narrow mind. In vain did a few disinterested persons at the court of St. Petersburg (for there are some such in all courts)—in vain did some estimable women (for there were some such even about Elizabeth)—in vain did these persons, lamenting the ignorance and the sort of desertion in which the young Peter was left, endea-

The marriage between this young princess and the grand-duke was an ill-assorted, unhappy, and, indeed, fatal one. Catherine, as we shall for the future call her, was handsome, inordinately fond of pleasure, possessed of considerable talents, ambitious, bold, and unprincipled. She was a most unlikely woman to have effected the reformation of Peter, even had there been an affection between them. But such an emotion did not exist on either side. Peter, when first introduced to his affianced bride, was just recovering from the small-pox, which had terribly disfigured a countenance originally plain almost to ugliness. Though Catherine was carefully prepared for the interview, yet her disappointment and repugnance were so great, that, though she fell on his neck and embraced him with affected joy for his recovery, no sooner had she returned to her own apartment than, unable to keep up the deception, she fainted away, and remained for three hours in a state of insensibility. But ambition prevailed; the lady suppressed her feelings of dislike, and the union was accomplished. Peter's manners were so unpolished, and even vulgar, that Catherine frequently blushed for him in society, while he himself often felt deeply pained at her superiority in this respect; and although he was neither without good qualities nor deficient in understanding, yet she was greatly his superior, both in intellect and resolution. This was soon discerned by the courtiers, who, perceiving that though Peter might be emperor, yet that the imperial power would be grasped by his more able consort, were even more assiduous in their attentions to her than to him.

Naturally, this widened the gulf between the ill-matched pair. Peter turned with indifference from the society of a wife who,

vour to represent to his aunt the danger he incurred. The empress was deaf to their remonstrances, and even on some occasions repulsed them with harshness. Among many examples one need only be mentioned—that of a woman of the bedchamber, who had the spirit to ask this princess why she kept the grand-duke from all the deliberations of the council. 'If you permit him not to know anything of what is necessary for governing the country,' added she, 'what do you think will become of him, and what do you think will become of the empire?' All the answer she got was, that Elizabeth, looking at her angrily, said, 'Johanna, knowest thou the way to Siberia?' However, the generous Johanna escaped with only the fright, and took care for the future to make no more remonstrances on that head to her mistress." Thus, by an assumption of anger, Elizabeth evaded a disagreeable topic.



to him, possessed no charm, and, mingling again with his boon companions, sought to forget his disappointment in renewed dissipation. Neglect turned Catherine's indifference into absolute dislike, and the insulted wife became the ambitious schemer. While Peter was strengthening his unpopularity, she was forming a political party around her. But she did not give herself entirely to ambition. Those powerful animal passions which eventually made her conduct the astonishment of Europe, soon manifested their influence over her. For a time her behaviour was at least outwardly decorous; but the unchaste examples set before her in the court of the lascivious Elizabeth, fostered and ripened the germs of voluptuous abandonment in the young and neglected wife. She received into her favour a person of humble birth and fortune, named Soltikoff, who was one of her husband's chamberlains and boon companions, and who had obtained such a reputation for his gallantries, that the husbands of St. Petersburg regarded him as the most agreeable and most dangerous man in town. With this man, the first of her known lovers, Catherine soon sullied the purity of the nuptial couch. As this person was the immediate cause of Catherine's entrance upon that strange career of sensuality by which her name is sullied, we will quote from the pages of Tooke,\* who relates them at length, and in a manner pregnant with interest, some particulars of his intimacy with the grand-duchess:—"Soltikoff was not long ere he lifted his eyes even to the spouse of his master; and vanity yet more than love led him to conceive the bold design of captivating her heart. He began by sedulously studying the inclinations of the princess. He perceived that, notwithstanding the constraint in which she lived, Catherine had always a propensity to pleasure; and that the solitude of Oranienbaum rendered dissipation necessary to her. He accordingly procured her some new amusement with every returning day. He engaged the grand-duke to give frequent entertainments; he took upon himself the task of inventing and directing them, secretly giving the grand-duchess to understand that she was the sole object for which they were made, and that it was to him alone she was indebted for them. Catherine was not insensible to such gallant, such continued attentions. The seducing figure of Soltikoff, and the vivacity of his

wit, had made an impression on her mind. His assiduities made him master of her affections; but Soltikoff, sensible that the heart of the grand-duchess was no ordinary conquest, was afraid of betraying himself by an imprudent explanation. It is even not impossible that, at first, he meant only to feign a passion which, in the sequel, grew up into a real attachment. In short, for a considerable time their fondness was mutual, without any declaration on the part of either.

"An unfortunate event was the occasion of accelerating this declaration. Soltikoff lost his father. His duty obliged him to repair to Moscow. He obtained the grand-duke's permission to depart; and at taking leave of Catherine, he was not sufficiently master of his feelings to prevent his discovering how much this parting cost him. The princess, who saw his tears, was no less touched herself at the cause whence they flowed; and fixing her eyes with a look of extreme significance on Soltikoff, she conjured him to shorten his absence as much as he could, and to return and forget his grief in the midst of a brilliant court, where, without him, there could be no such thing as pleasure.

"The character of Soltikoff renders it easy to judge what effect these words must have produced. He thought he perceived that he was beloved, and his conscious pride redoubled. His journey occupied him but a few days. What were domestic concerns when balanced with the felicity he expected? What was Moscow to him in comparison to St. Petersburg? He abandoned all for the sake of returning to secure his triumph.

"However, on approaching the grand-duchess, all the flattering ideas with which he had regaled his delighted imagination began suddenly to dissolve and vanish. His audacity forsook him. He found himself a prey to the most serious and gloomy reflections. He saw at once all the danger of his amour. He could no longer presume to flatter himself that Catherine would so far forget what she owed to her rank, to her spouse, as to accept the assiduities of a simple chamberlain. But if he were so happy as to see her vouchsafe to correspond to his passion, could he imagine that he should deceive the penetrating eyes of the jealous and humiliated courtiers by whom she was surrounded? In a word, how risk a confession which might be repaid by a perpetual imprisonment, or even with the

\* *Life of the Empress Catherine II.*, vol. i.



loss of life! He shuddered, he trembled; he had resolved to renounce the fallacious hopes his unbounded arrogance had made him cherish.

"In this state of perturbation and despondency, Soltikoff no longer displayed that brilliant gaiety for which he had hitherto been always distinguished. In vain did he sometimes affect an air of easy elegance which he now no more possessed. A settled melancholy corroded his heart, and was depicted on his face; his health was visibly declining. The grand-duchess took the alarm; and one day, on finding herself alone with him, desired him to reveal the cause of so sudden an alteration. Soltikoff, unable at that moment to stifle or resist a passion thus preying on his vitals, avowed it in expressions of the tenderest emotion. Catherine heard him without anger; she seemed even to pity him; but, with a collected air, she counselled him to renounce an inclination of the irregularity and danger of which he ought to be sensible. Although still very young, Soltikoff knew but too well the female heart to be ignorant that she who allows herself to listen to a lover has already begun to approve him. He took courage. He threw himself at the knees of the grand-duchess, and embraced them with boldness. The princess was agitated; she let fall some tears; and retiring precipitately from the transports of Soltikoff to go and shut herself in her cabinet, she addressed to him that verse which Monimia speaks to Xiphares in the tragedy of *Mithridates* :—

"*Et méritez les pleurs que vous m'allez coûter.*"

From that moment the chamberlain resumed his wonted gaiety with returning hope; and the alteration in his behaviour was felt by all around him." The conclusion of this adventure may be more readily conceived than described.

Peter, blinded for a time, at length suspected this domestic treachery, and complained to the empress of the man who had dared to inflict this dishonour upon him. Elizabeth was incensed, and would have banished the offender to Siberia; but, at the suggestion of the chancellor Bestuchef, Soltikoff was sent abroad under the veil of an honourable embassy.

Catherine did not long regret the absence of her paramour, whose place was soon supplied by another. This was Count Stanislaus

\* And merit those tears you are about to cost me.

Poniatowski, a Polish adventurer, whose grandfather had been a steward on a small estate of one of the nobles of his country, but whose father had acquired distinction by the services he rendered to Charles XII., whom, as we have related, he led, when wounded and helpless, off the field at Pultawa, through the ranks of the opposing Russians. The archduchess, in writing to the old count, observed—"Charles knew how to distinguish your merit; I also can distinguish that of your son, whom I may one day raise, perhaps, even above Charles himself." To dignify her new lover she contrived to obtain for him the post of ambassador from the king of Poland to the empress Elizabeth. The open sensuality of the latter was continually increasing—a circumstance which tended to make Catherine less guarded in her amours. Her husband, who lived apart from her, now acknowledged Elizabeth Vorontzoff as his mistress; an event which the archduchess rather rejoiced in, as furnishing some indirect apology for her own irregularities. So careless did she become, that she was surprised by Peter in a situation with Poniatowski which left no doubt of her guilt. Irritated at this painful confirmation of what he had previously merely suspected, the grand-duke complained to the empress, and, when exhorted to moderation, threatened to cudgel Poniatowski to death. The latter, fearing the consequences of his crime, fled from St. Petersburg, and returned to Poland.

Catherine's estrangement from her husband had ripened from dislike into hatred. He had the imprudence to talk of repudiating her as soon as he came to the throne—a circumstance which she resolved to anticipate by a bolder movement. Assisted by the wily Bestuchef, and by several of the Russian nobles, she lent herself to a conspiracy for the purpose of excluding her husband from the succession, and the elevation of herself as regent during the minority of her infant son Paul. It was with this object, then, that Bestuchef had laboured to make the grand-duke unpopular, and had reported to the empress every indiscretion he committed, every hasty expression he uttered.

Cautious as the high chancellor was, he had proceeded in his criminal design with too much rapidity. General Apraxin was tried for his retreat from the Prussian troops whom he had defeated, but acquitted—only, however, to die immediately afterwards. But the intrigues of Bestuchef were revealed,



and he was arrested. His letter, directing Apraxin to retreat, was produced against him, and found to be written in the name of the empress, though it was dispatched without her knowledge, and in contravention of her will. Amongst his papers, also, was found a copy of the deed of renunciation, which he intended to compel Peter to subscribe in the event of the conspiracy being successful. His guilt was evident, and he was sentenced to banishment.

In the spring of 1758, the Russian army again invaded the Prussian dominions. By his successes, towards the close of the preceding year, Frederic had to some extent retrieved his fortunes, and he received an enormous subsidy from England, where his heroism had excited as much enthusiasm as it had elicited from his own subjects. After some operations against the Austrians, Frederic marched to meet the Russians, who slaying, burning, and destroying wherever they went, had penetrated into the heart of his realm. Frederic attacked them at Zorn-dorf, near Frankfort, on the Oder. The battle was a long and bloody one; for not only were the Prussian soldiers irritated by the wanton ravages of their half-savage invaders, but a feeling of deep animosity existed between them and the Russians. The loss on both sides was immense, but that of the Russians was the most severe. Yet both armies claimed the victory, and the Russians maintained their position for several days after the battle; but they gave Frederic no further trouble that campaign.

Elizabeth still resolved on the ruin of Frederic. In the fourth campaign (1759), the most disastrous of all during this fiercely-contested war, the Russians, under Count Soltikoff (not the banished paramour of Catherine), spread themselves over the Prussian territory, and commenced their customary devastations. The Russian army, consisting of nearly 70,000 men, and aided by a powerful artillery, was intercepted in an attempt to effect a passage of the Oder by a Prussian army, consisting only of 30,000 men, under General Wedel. Besides this inferiority in numbers, the position of the Prussians was very disadvantageous. They had to pass a bridge and a defile, so narrow that scarcely the third of a battalion could march in front. From the nature of the ground, also, the cavalry could not support the infantry. Yet the engagement was resolutely maintained, though it terminated in a defeat of the Prussians, who lost 4,700 men

in those killed and taken prisoners, while the wounded were estimated at 3,000 more. The disheartened Prussians were compelled to retire: their victorious adversaries seized on the towns of Krossen and Frankfort, effected a junction with 12,000 Austrian cavalry and 8,000 infantry, under General Laudohn, and intrenched themselves strongly at Kunersdorf.

Frederic, joined by the discomfited forces of General Wedel, and by some other reinforcements, was at the head of an army of 50,000 men. That of the Russians, since the junction of General Laudohn, was upwards of 90,000, whose intrenched camp was defended by a prodigious number of cannon. Yet Frederic hastened to attack them; and notwithstanding the disadvantages arrayed against him, it was imperative that he should give them battle. Berlin was threatened by the Austrians, under General Daun; Saxony was also exposed to the ravages of the imperial troops; while the Russians were encamped before his eyes in Silesia, the best and richest part of his dominions. It has been observed, that "the sanguine temper of other generals has often obliged them to fight under disadvantages; but the king of Prussia's circumstances were such, that, from the multitude of his enemies, he was neither able to consult times nor situations. Rashness could hardly dictate anything which, in his condition, would not have been recommended by prudence."

The battle was fought on the 12th of August, and after a fierce cannonade, Frederic's troops attacked the left wing of the Russian army with an impetuosity which carried everything before it. Great slaughter ensued, the Russian intrenchments were forced, and seventy-two pieces of cannon captured. Several redoubts which covered the Russian camp were successively attacked and taken by the Prussians. The former fought with extraordinary obstinacy; but they were driven back with immense loss; and Frederic concluded that the day must be his own. So satisfied was he of this, that he dispatched a courier to Berlin with a note to the queen, saying, "Madam, we have beat the Russians from their intrenchments. In two hours expect to hear of a glorious victory." The king's conclusion was a precipitate one; the Russians, shattered and almost defeated as they were, rallied and made a stand at a redoubt which had been erected in a position re-



garded as almost impregnable. Frederic saw that if he could drive them from this point, that utter defeat must await them. But with an army which, though beaten, was still numerically superior to his own, and prepared to dispute every inch of ground with a dogged courage that seemed insensible of danger, the enterprise was both hazardous and uncertain. Frederic's generals expostulated with him; as they were unanimous in their opinion that it was unwise to attempt to push any further the advantages they had obtained. They represented to him that the enemy was still very numerous, their artillery considerable, and the post they occupied one of great strength; that his troops, who had been engaged for some hours in a severe action, during an exceedingly hot day, were too much exhausted for a new attempt, especially one of such difficulty as might daunt even troops that were fresh. They added, that he would reap all the effects of a victory, as the enemy would be obliged to retire into Poland, and thus leave him free to act in other quarters where his presence was just as necessary.

Admitting the force of these arguments, Frederic yet decided upon hazarding a blow which might effectually scatter the Russian forces. His infantry, almost fainting from heat and the fatigue of six hours' fighting, were again led to the attack, but repulsed with great slaughter. Frederic led two charges in person, had two horses killed beneath him, and his coat pierced by several bullets. It was in vain; and so fearful was the massacre, that a feeling of terror began to spread through the Prussian ranks. Frederic then put the matter in the hands of his cavalry, who spent their remaining strength in several unavailing attacks. When on the point of abandoning their fruitless efforts, a large body of Russian and Austrian horse, which had been hitherto unengaged, charged their jaded ranks. The Prussian cavalry was broken, hurled back upon the foot, and the whole army thrown into confusion. A panic spread from rank to rank, and the men fled in disorder. The king acted with wonderful energy and heroism, and nearly fell into the hands of his enemies. The approach of night, and a judicious use of some eminences, alone saved the Prussian army from total destruction. All their artillery was lost, 20,000 of them had perished or been taken prisoners, and many thousands more were hopelessly scattered.

Exhausted in body, and shattered in mind, Frederic reached a ruined and deserted farmhouse, where throwing himself on a heap of straw, he dictated another despatch to the queen. This second missive differed widely from the one sent earlier in the day, and ran thus:—"Remove from Berlin with the royal family. Let the archives be carried to Potsdam. The town may make conditions with the enemy." So complete did the king's ruin appear, that he again thought of suicide, and even wrote a farewell to some of his friends. In one of these letters he observed—"I have no resources left; all is lost. I will not survive the ruin of my country. Farewell for ever!"

The Russians and Austrians lost some time in congratulations and rejoicings, and more in disagreements arising from jealousy. Marshal Daun, the Austrian general, was for pushing forward and passing the Oder; but Soltikoff, the Russian general, said he had done enough, and declined to move far from Poland for fear he should be without the means of provisioning his troops. He therefore retired into winter quarters in Poland, while his soldiers committed such atrocities in their progress, that Frederic, on learning the particulars, exclaimed—"We have to do with barbarians who are digging the grave of humanity." The king so profited by the delays and dissensions of his enemies, that, at the close of 1759, he still stood on the defensive, with a considerable army at his command; but his prospects for the future were gloomy in the extreme.

Some fruitless negotiations for peace took place in the following spring (1760.) Hostilities were therefore resumed, and the campaign opened unfavourably for Frederic. The Russians and Austrians entered Berlin, took up their quarters in the royal palaces, emptied the arsenal, and levied contributions on the inhabitants; but they deemed it prudent to retire on the approach of the king. As his presence was no longer required at Berlin, Frederic entered Saxony, where he was induced, by the desperate situation of his affairs, to attack the Austrians under Marshal Laudohn at Lignitz, where, after an obstinate battle, he gained a victory, and compelled them to retreat. Shortly afterwards he gained a sanguinary triumph over another Austrian army under General Daun, which compelled the imperial troops to retire from his dominions.



Their example was followed by the Russians, to the dissatisfaction both of Elizabeth and the Austrian court, who were each surprised that the combined imperial forces had not accomplished more. A feeling prevailed, both at Vienna and St. Petersburg, that the fault lay with the Russian general; therefore Soltikoff was recalled, and the command given to Count Butterlin.

At the commencement of 1761, it was evident that the position of the king of Prussia was most critical; and probable that the great soldier who had so long held at bay a most formidable and ungenerous combination, would soon be hunted to his ruin. The resources of Prussia were becoming exhausted; and though in this campaign no great battle was gained by the enemy, yet, "in spite of the desperate bounds of the hunted tiger, the circle of pursuers was fast closing round him." Occupying a strong camp in Silesia, he remained watching, with rage and bitterness of heart, the proceedings of his enemies, who, spread over his defenceless territories, carried on the work of extortion or desolation. His strong mind was much affected by the seemingly desperate nature of his position, and he felt his misfortunes more heavily than ever. He became reserved, and seldom talked even with his most confidential officers; indeed, he afterwards admitted that he began to look around him with blank despair at the desolated state of the country, unable to imagine where recruits, horses, or provisions were to be found. Towards the close of the year his misfortunes received an addition by the death of George II., king of England, who expired suddenly on the 25th of October, and the abandonment of the Prussian interests by his youthful and narrow-minded successor. The first Mr. Pitt was compelled to retire from the ministry, and his successors sought to make peace with France, and to shake off any continental alliance that interfered with their project. "The policy then followed," observes Mr. Macaulay, "inspired Frederic with an unjust but deep and bitter aversion to the English name, and produced effects which are still felt throughout the civilised world. To that policy it was owing that, some years later, England could not find on the whole continent a single ally to stand by her, in her extreme need, against the house of Bourbon. To that policy it was owing that Frederic, alienated from England, was compelled to

connect himself closely, during his later years, with Russia, and was induced to assist in that great crime—the fruitful parent of other great crimes—the first partition of Poland."

But the despondency of Frederic was greatly lightened by another event which occurred shortly after the death of George II. and the defection of England. This was the death of his powerful and persevering enemy the empress Elizabeth, which took place on the 25th of December, 1761, after a reign of twenty years.

The health of the empress had been for some time declining; and she doubtless accelerated the progress of natural decay in vain endeavours to evade the results of illness by a recourse to her customary dissipation. Festivities, balls, masquerades, and brilliant shows still yielded a faint amusement; and, dreading to lie down upon a restless pillow, she frequently went to the opera or play at eleven, passed the rest of the night at table, and went to bed at five in the morning. At other times she listened with avidity to the idle tales brought to her concerning the amorous revels of the grand-duke Peter with his mistress, the coarse, ugly Countess Vorontzoff, to whom she scornfully gave the nickname of *la Pompadour*: and in such amusements as these did the empress of Russia seek for some alleviation of the infirmities that were rapidly terminating her life. As the close of her existence approached she was tormented with violent pains in the stomach, which no medicines had power to alleviate. To procure some respite from suffering she had frequent recourse to her usual means of stifling sensibility in the stupefaction brought on by the use of strong waters. In vain did her physicians represent to her that she herself was contributing to frustrate their efforts, and accelerating the period of her days. In vain did her attendants, by sacrificing obedience to affection, secretly remove or destroy the intoxicating beverage; she would constantly have a case of it in her chamber, of which the key was always kept within reach.

The enemies of the grand-duke had recently so blackened his character to the empress, that she was even induced to entertain a ridiculous fear that he might be led to accelerate her death by poison. Influenced by this feeling, she ordered him to be denied admittance to her apartment, and also extended this prohibition to Catherine, with whom she had been for some time displeased. If Elizabeth died without seeing the grand-



duke and his consort, it was feared injurious rumours might be circulated among the people. Count Panin, therefore, the governor of Catherine's infant son, Paul Petrovitch, devoted himself to bringing about an interview and a reconciliation. The count, therefore, concerted arrangements with the confessor of the empress, who, approaching the bedside of his mistress, commenced a religious discourse to her. He spoke of the Supreme Sovereign by whom earthly monarchs reign—of his justice, his clemency, and his tribunal, before which only they who forgive can obtain forgiveness; and of that kingdom of God, of which the terrestrial paradise was but a faint resemblance; but where only the charitable can obtain admission, where only the merciful can hope for mercy. Touched by fears for her salvation, the dying empress consented to see her nephew and his consort. At this instant the grand-duke entered, leading Catherine by the hand, and they both fell upon their knees by the bedside. Then Elizabeth, in an indistinct tone of voice, and as if her lips only spoke the words, uttered whatever was dictated to her by the priest. Addressing herself to the prince and princess, she said, "that she had always loved them; and that, with her dying breath, she wished them all kinds of blessings." Every witness of this scene saw that the pardon came only from the lips of the empress; but Peter was satisfied with the appearance of a reconciliation, and his partisans repeated, through the city, the affectionate words pronounced by the empress, together with several additional embellishments of their own.

The partiality of the grand-duke Peter to Frederic we have alluded to: it was more than a friendship; it amounted to a perfect infatuation in favour of the monarch he admired and sought to imitate. He even went so far, amongst his Holstein associates, as to allude to him by the title of "*the king my master*." Frederic knew that, from Russia, he had no more to fear during this terrible struggle, and he was at liberty to direct his efforts entirely against his other enemies.

Elizabeth died during the autumnal phase of life, in her fifty-second year. She was one of those comparatively negative characters who do little harm, and less good. The business of the empire was conducted for her by others; for she was too indolent to arrive at any judgment of her own. When, as in the case of the war with Prussia, she formed any strong opinion, it arose not from

a dispassionate examination of conflicting facts, but from motives of an entirely personal nature. Though not deficient in intellect, yet her mental power was paralysed by her constitutional indolence. This was so great, that even for months together she could not be induced to give the least attention to the affairs of state. Sometimes, for a considerable period, she refused even to sign her name. The three great points in her character were indolence, voluptuousness, and superstition. Perhaps the greatest harm she did, was the immoral example she set to the ladies of her court and empire—an example which, sustained as it afterwards was by the empress Catherine, produced abundance of pernicious fruit.

The oppressions and tyranny carried on during her reign, were, with a few exceptions, rather permitted than transacted by her. Such was her superstition, that the most abandoned licentiousness and the most shameless orgies were alternated with prayers and devotional exercises. The violation of a fast threw her into pangs of remorse; and the sight of a person in mourning awoke in her very painful emotions. Profligacy of the most abandoned kind remained unchecked by her; for how could she reprehend that which her own example created? But she punished with great rigour the assumed offence of eating an egg on a day which the church had appointed for abstinence.

"The empress Elizabeth," observes Tooke, "had insensibly proceeded from moderate pleasures to the extravagance of sensuality; and her taste for devotion augmented with her voluptuousness. She continued whole hours on her knees before the picture of some saint, to which she spoke, which she even consulted; and passed alternately from acts of bigotry to the intemperance of lust, and from scenes of lasciviousness to the opiates of prayer. She would frequently drink to excess; and, at such times, too sensual, too impatient for the delays of unlacing, her women used to effect the same purpose by means of the scissors. In what manner such nights were passed, it becomes not the historian to undraw her curtains to reveal."

Amongst her follies—for the word vice is perhaps too harsh for these minor imperfections of character—were the girlish vanity and wanton extravagance of the empress. She regarded it as a crime against the state, if one of the ladies of her court presumed to



wear dresses of the same pattern as those which adorned her, or received the newest French fashions before she did. After the death of Elizabeth between fifteen and sixteen thousand dresses were found in her wardrobe; some of which had been worn but once, while others had never been put on at all. In addition to these were two large chests full of silk stockings, two others of ribands, some thousand pairs of shoes, and several hundred pieces of French and other rich stuffs. These were neither given away nor sold, although the empress was constantly in pressing want of money; but left undisturbed until they spoiled.

The greatest virtue of Elizabeth was her aversion to the shedding of blood; but her much-praised clemency was sullied by many acts of oppression, and even of cruelty. If she did not sanction the infliction of death, she permitted that of torture, which was used to a frightful extent during her reign; she also established a detestable system of espionage, which crushed all public, and poisoned all private, freedom. It is computed that, every year, about 1,000 of her subjects were privately arrested and consigned to prison. It was an easy thing for one of the numerous favourites and parasites who swarmed around the empress, to obtain a secret order, granted without inquiry, for the arrest of some one who had incurred their displeasure. Even if one of the ladies of the court considered herself slighted, she could obtain an order by which the object of her anger was forced out of bed at night, gagged, blindfolded, and hurried away to some dungeon, where such unhappy victims frequently dragged out the remainder of their lives without being charged

with any crime, or even knowing in what part of the country they were. It was dangerous for the family to pursue inquiries after the lost one. "He has disappeared," was held to be a sufficient answer to their distracted questions. Probably much, if not all, of this dark tyranny was transacted without the knowledge of the empress, who was generally goodnatured, and even amiable, to those who had the address to please her, but unforgiving and vindictive when offended. Even her good temper was chilled and largely neutralised by a vivid consciousness of what was due to her as empress. It is related of her, that one day she was waited on at her toilet by a lady of the court, who remained standing only at the expense of great and visible effort. This was at length discerned by Elizabeth, who inquired what was the matter with her. "My legs are very much swelled," was the reply. "Well, well," returned the empress, "lean against that bureau; I will seem as if I did not see you." Notwithstanding her personal indolence, she had some taste for literature, and established a university at Moscow, and an academy for the fine arts at St. Petersburg. She also exerted herself to forward the compilation of a code of laws for the Russian empire—a task which was begun under Peter the Great, but not completed until the reign of Catherine II. Though Elizabeth was never married, she left several natural children. One of these was the unfortunate Princess Tarrakanoff, to whom we shall have occasion to allude hereafter, and whose sad fate, brought about by the jealousy of Catherine II., forms one of the most touching episodes of Russian history.

### CHAPTER XXX.

ACCESSION OF PETER III.; HE MAKES PEACE WITH PRUSSIA; HE EFFECTS RAPID BUT IMPORTANT REFORMS; RECALL OF MARSHAL MUNICH AND OTHER EXILES FROM SIBERIA; PETER'S CONDUCT TO HIS CONSORT CATHERINE; HE SEIZES ON THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH; CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE EMPEROR; HE MAKES PREPARATIONS FOR A HOSTILE EXPEDITION TO DENMARK; OUTBREAK OF THE CONSPIRACY, AND APPEAL OF CATHERINE TO THE ISMAELOFFSKI GUARDS; SHE IS PROCLAIMED EMPRESS; VACILLATING CONDUCT AND COWARDICE OF THE CZAR; HE SURRENDERS TO CATHERINE; SIGNS A FORM OF ABDICATION; TRIUMPHAL ENTRANCE OF CATHERINE INTO ST. PETERSBURG; REACTION OF THE POPULAR FEELING; MURDER OF PETER, III.; ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER.

THE conspiracy against the grand-duke Peter was not sufficiently ripe to be carried into execution. No sooner, therefore, were the eyes of Elizabeth closed in death, than the courtiers pressed in crowds around Peter, and accosted him as their sovereign.



Laying aside the weakness and indecision which so frequently characterised him, he accosted them with dignity, and at once received the oaths of the officers of his guards. He then rode through the streets of St. Petersburg; and distributed money to the people, who, notwithstanding the attempts that had been made to bring him into contempt, received him with acclamations. The soldiers also mixed their shouts with those of the populace; and, flocking around the new monarch, exclaimed, "If thou take care of us, we will serve thee as faithfully as we served our good empress." Still it was plainly observable that there was no enthusiasm or affection on the part of the people towards Peter; none of that real joy which is commonly manifested by a people on the accession of a young prince to the throne. The absence of this feeling was universal, and the new sovereign did not find any more affection in the larger circle of his court, than in the smaller one of his family. An ill-feeling towards foreigners prevailed in Russia; and although the blood of Peter the Great ran in the veins of the new emperor, and he had so far a claim upon the national affection, yet he was a German on the father's side, and had resided so little in Russia, that he was regarded as almost a foreigner. Unhappily, also, his confidence and familiarity were confined to the Germans from his dukedom; and neither in manners, language, nor in religious profession, did he seem a complete and genuine Russian. He was also suspected of a design to remodel the whole system of the empire, and to put everything on a German footing. In addition to this, it was believed by the friends of his consort Catherine, that he intended to divorce her, deprive her son Paul of the succession, and raise his mistress, Elizabeth Vorontzoff, to the imperial throne.

The young, energetic, brilliant, but we fear unprincipled Princess Daschkaw, who was the chief agent of the conspiracy which so soon deprived Peter of his throne and life, in a work\* written for the purpose of vindicating herself from the aspersions cast upon her, especially by the French authors, assigns no reason for the part she took in conducting this conspiracy, further than her attachment to Catherine, and her fears that Peter might divorce his erring consort, or consign her to a convent or other prison.

\* *Memoirs of the Princess Daschkaw, Lady of Honour to Catherine II.; written by herself.*

A few days after the accession of the emperor, he sought an interview with the princess, whose sister was, as we have mentioned, his mistress, and a singular contrast in manners and intellectual culture to herself. The princess thus relates what passed:—"The emperor, as soon as I had appeared in his presence, began to address me on a subject which seemed very near his heart, and in a manner which confirmed all my suspicions and alarm on account of the empress. He spoke in a low voice and in half-sentences, but in terms unequivocally expressive of his intentions to displace *her*, as he indicated the empress, and to raise *Romanovna*, as he said, when speaking of my sister, to the throne. Having thus declared himself, he proceeded to give me some salutary cautions. 'If, my little friend,' said he, 'you will take my advice, pay a little more attention to *us*; the time may come when you will have good reason to repent of any negligence shown to your sister; believe me, it is for your interest alone I speak; you have no other way of making yourself of any consequence in the world than by studying her disposition, and striving to gain her countenance and protection.'" Without aspersing the truthfulness of the Princess Daschkaw, it is evident that she wrote with a strong bias against the unfortunate Peter, and she omits no relation that can place him in a contemptible light. "To act as corporal-major every morning on the grand parade," she observes, "to eat a good dinner, to drink Burgundy, to spend the evening among buffoons and a certain set of ladies, and to do everything which the king of Prussia ordered him to do, was what formed the felicity and glory of Peter III., and is an epitome of his mode of life for the seven months which constituted his reign."

Peter announced his accession to the king of Prussia before he communicated this important information to any other power. He even liberated all the Prussian prisoners, and gave them money to defray their expenses home. An armistice with Prussia was soon concluded, attended by a manifesto, in which Peter declared, that his first duty being the welfare of his people, that welfare could not be consulted so long as hostilities were continued; that the war had produced no advantage to either party, but done incredible harm to both; that he would no longer sanction the wanton destruction of his species; that, in



conformity with the divine injunction relative to the preservation of the people committed to his charge, he terminated the unnatural and impious strife; and that he was resolved to restore the conquests made by the Russian troops. The emperor would deserve high commendation for these generous sentiments, but that they were uttered to colour the peace he was about to conclude with Frederic, and not from any abstract love of peace itself. At this very time he was not only loud in his expressions of enmity to Denmark, but he had resolved on war with that kingdom to resent some injury done to his father, and to wrest from it the duchy of Schleswig, which he regarded as being his by inheritance. Frederic gave his admirer some good advice, and urged him not to engage in a war with Denmark, or to leave the empire before he was firmly seated upon the throne; but Peter never listened to good counsel until it was too late to follow it.

The emperor was regardless of the interests and intentions of his allies. The Austrian court was merely informed that he was about to conclude peace with the king of Prussia. Peter hurried forward the proceedings; and, on the 5th of May, the treaty was signed at St. Petersburg, and shortly afterwards proclaimed in Berlin. By it the emperor not only concluded such a peace with Frederic as the latter could only have hoped for after a series of victories, but entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with him; and 15,000 Russian troops were sent to join the shattered Prussian army, against which they had been so recently opposed. Frederic made great use of this timely assistance. He reconquered Silesia, gave the Austrians a defeat, and soon presented to the forces of Maria Theresa a front as formidable as before the great reverses of 1759. Sweden followed the example of Russia, and concluded a peace with Frederic shortly after the czar had done so.

Peter's conduct towards Frederic was both precipitate and unwise, when we consider the strong anti-German feeling existing among the Russian people. It was well to make peace with the Prussian monarch, with whom the empress Elizabeth had gone to war without a sufficient cause; and, indeed, for hardly any other reason than that of personal animosity. But that peace should have been concluded with sobriety, and, if possible, in conjunction

with the allies of Russia. Assuredly Peter should have abstained from rendering direct assistance to Frederic, and from permitting his troops to act against those of his ally, Austria. To such an imprudent extent did he carry his admiration of that monarch, that one evening, when he had been drinking to excess, he directed his conversation, according to custom, upon the great soldiering. Fixing his eyes suddenly on Volkoff, one of the ministers of state, he exclaimed—"You must agree that he is a magician, a sorcerer, that king of Prussia! He knew all our plans for the campaign as soon as we had resolved on them." Volkoff coloured; but Peter resumed—"Why that embarrassment? You have no longer any need to fear Siberia. Is it not true that, notwithstanding the dread you had of it, you communicated to me all the plans and projects that were resolved on in the council, and that I sent them off to his majesty the king?"

Other circumstances, also, contributed to place the emperor in a false light with respect to his people. Instead of remaining at home to win their affections, he, at this critical period, made preparations for a visit to Germany, merely for the sake of obtaining an interview with the distinguished monarch, the contemplation of whose genius seems to have disturbed the balance of his intellect. It was observed, also, by the numbers who were interested in the fate of Catherine and her son, the grand-duke Paul, that neither of them were mentioned in the manifesto by which Peter proclaimed his accession to the throne. This circumstance strengthened the suspicions of those who believed that he intended to repudiate Catherine and deprive Paul of the succession, and gave additional activity to the discontented courtiers who were conspiring against him. He had also neglected to make preparations for his coronation at Moscow, which ceremony was viewed as deriving a peculiar sanctity from its being performed in that ancient city, which the people regarded with something of superstitious reverence.

Yet Peter's errors were such as produced little or no injury to the empire; while he possessed some estimable qualities. Though he censured the late empress for having abolished capital punishment, and declared that it was necessary to put great offenders to death, yet he was one of the mildest and least revengeful of sovereigns who ever occu-



pied the Russian throne. Though he had many personal enemies, he pardoned them all on his assumption of the imperial crown, and seemed, in his capacity of emperor, to have forgotten the wrongs inflicted on the grand-duke. Though some of his notions of reform were extravagant, yet he effected many changes of a beneficial character. He abolished that hateful system of espionage which, under the name of the "Secret Chancery," was the terror of every family in Russia. He prohibited the use of torture—a very necessary regulation, after the frightful extent to which it had been carried during the reign of Elizabeth. He made a generous sacrifice to the interests of his nobility, by making them independent of the caprices of the sovereign. Prior to his reign no boyard could enter on any profession, or forsake it when once embraced, or retire from public to private life, or dispose of his property, or travel into any foreign country, without the permission of the czar. Peter resigned these checks upon the liberty of his nobles, and thus added an important step to the career of social emancipation. Though in the army he endeavoured to introduce many changes which were considered objectionable—such as the introduction of the Prussian drill and costume—yet he enhanced the dignity of the officers, by rescuing them from the degrading punishments to which they had been previously subjected. He instituted a court to take cognizance of all offences committed against the public peace, and to punish the delinquencies of those who were entrusted with the general police of the empire. He made arrangements for the promotion of commerce, and he constantly showed himself the protector and friend of the poor. An elaborate historian of this period remarks, that a complete and sudden transformation occurred in the character, or rather the behaviour, of the new monarch. "Gentleness and humanity took the place of violence, and reflection succeeded to passion. The grand-duke had been inconsistent, impetuous, and wild: Peter III. now showed himself equitable, patient, and enlightened." Unhappily, this seeming reformation was very transient, and the czar soon acted as if he actually desired to win the contempt of his nobles, and the indifference, if not dislike, of his people.

Peter also recalled from Siberia most of those who had been sent there during the

reign of Elizabeth. Amongst the exiles who returned was Marshal Munich, then eighty-two years of age. The venerable old soldier was met, on his approach to the capital, by his one remaining son and thirty-two of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Accompanied by them, he presented himself before the emperor, dressed in the rough sheepskin pelisse which he had worn in the deserts of Pelim. Peter restored to the aged soldier his rank of field-marshal; and expressed a hope that, notwithstanding his advanced age, he might still serve him. "Since your majesty," replied Munich, "has brought me from darkness to light, and called me from the depths of a cavern to admit me to the foot of the throne, you will find me ever ready to expose my life in your service. Neither a tedious exile, nor the severity of a Siberian climate, have been able to extinguish, or even to damp, the ardour I have formerly shown for the interests of Russia and the glory of its monarch."

Notwithstanding the clement temper of the emperor, Catherine entertained a dread that he might punish her for her infidelities towards him. Though she had long ceased to reside with him as his wife, yet she was compelled to wear a peculiar dress at the time of his accession, in order to conceal her pregnancy. But Peter was remarkably forgiving, and appeared not to discern those faults in her which were patent to every one else. He appeared to forget the wrongs he had suffered, in the attractions of her person and the power of her mind. He frequently passed many hours in her apartments, and discoursed with her, in a confidential manner, on important matters. Yet, with the inconsistency which ever characterised him, he would sometimes refer with bitterness to the wrongs she had done him, and treat her with harshness and disrespect. At one time he would bestow on her the most profound marks of respect; and at another, treat her in a manner which no lady could bear with patience. Thus, on the occasion of the benediction of the waters, which is regarded as one of the most sacred ceremonies of the Russian church, he made her appear adorned with all the marks of imperial dignity; while he followed in her train as a simple colonel. Not long after, while seated with Catherine at a public entertainment, he called to his mistress, the Countess Vorontzoff, who was passing by, and made her come and sit down beside them. The



empress immediately retired, and Peter made no attempt to detain her. The same evening, while at supper, he loudly called her a fool before a number of guests. Catherine burst into tears; and Peter injured himself more in the estimation of the spectators by this one act of temper than he would have done by some public tyranny.

Scenes of this kind kept alive the dislike which Catherine bore towards her husband, and revived her hopes of supplanting him on the throne. She made it her chief business to gain those hearts which he was losing. A perfect mistress of the art of dissimulation, it cost her no effort to assume, when in the presence of the multitude, sentiments the most opposed to her own secret convictions. Though a student of the sceptical philosophy of France, and an admirer of Voltaire, she assumed the manners of a fanatic. Every day she sedulously repaired to the churches of St. Petersburg, and prayed with all the semblance of a fervent devotion. She became punctual in the performance of the most superstitious practices of the Greek church. She accosted the poor with benignity, and treated the priests with reverence. As a natural result of this, the latter proclaimed her praises from house to house, and the populace regarded her as a benevolent princess. Catherine also kept her court with a mixture of dignity and affability which charmed all who approached her. Peter, on the other hand, soon relapsed into his old dissipated habits. To such an extent did he forget his rank, as to live familiarly with buffoons, and to allow them to sit at table with him. One evening, while at the Countess Narishkin's, after having attended the theatre, he caused the comedians to sit down promiscuously with the ladies and grandees of the court, and seated himself beside a dancer, whom he called his little wife. These acts of imprudence not only displeased his nobles and people, but caused injurious reports to be made by the ambassadors from foreign courts.

But the most dangerous of the emperor's indiscretions was the sudden and sweeping alterations he effected with respect to the property of the church. He seems to have been bent upon following the example of his illustrious grandfather, without reflecting that he had neither the power nor the patience that was possessed by the wise czar. Great was the difference between the conduct of the two monarchs with re-

spect to the church. Peter I. did not endeavour to abolish its notorious abuses until, by a long career of great and brilliant actions, he had laid the foundations of his throne in the hearts of his people. Peter III. had no sooner laid his hand upon the imperial sceptre than he struck at the root of all the power of the church, by depriving it of its wealth—an act which, as it was of the nature of a confiscation, he had no right to do unless the priesthood had, by some great offence, deserved to lose what was taken from them, and which even then would have been imprudent and dangerous, when the intensely superstitious character of the Russian people is remembered.

Without reflecting on these matters, the emperor seized the vast possessions of the church, and made them into domains of the crown. The clergy he placed upon yearly salaries, varying from 5,000 down to 100 roubles. He even proceeded still further to irritate the clergy, by taking from the churches the figures of the saints, which both priests and people regarded as objects of profound veneration, and made certain arbitrary regulations concerning the beards and costume of the secular clergy. The Bishop of Novgorod, who exclaimed against this conduct as an impious violation of the sanctuary, he condemned to banishment, but afterwards showed his weakness by recalling in obedience to popular clamour. Peter cared but little for religion; but he had exhibited a bias towards Lutheranism rather than to the Greek form of Christianity used by the Russian church. The incensed priests therefore spread a report throughout the empire, that the emperor had only pretended to embrace the Greek communion to qualify himself for filling the throne, but that he was still a Lutheran at heart, of which he was every day giving proofs by showing a profound contempt for the rites, the ceremonies, and the religion of the Russians. Frederic of Prussia, with whom Peter constantly corresponded and informed of all he did, recommended him to be cautious with respect to the possessions of the church, and not to meddle with the dress of the monks, as small matters were of great consequence in the eyes of the ignorant and fanatical. Fearing what might happen, Frederic also urged him to maintain the respect which was due to his consort, the more especially so for his own security. The unsuspecting Peter, who was surrounded by traitors, and breathing an air



tainted by duplicity and conspiracy, replied, "In regard to the concern you take in my safety, I beseech you to give yourself no uneasiness. The soldiers call me their father, and say that they had rather be governed by a man than by a woman. I take my walks alone about the streets of St. Petersburg; if any one designed to do me harm, he would have executed his purpose long ago. But I am continually doing good on all occasions that offer, and I trust in the protection of God alone. With that I have nothing to fear."

The Countess Vorontzoff, Peter's mistress, had obtained a considerable amount of influence over him, and she now had the address to cause him to renew the promise he had made when only grand-duke—that he would marry her, and place her on the throne instead of Catherine. Elated with the prospect of this distinction, she had the imprudence to boast of it—a circumstance which led to her own ruin, and accelerated that of the czar. The latter, equally indiscreet, seemed to authorise by his conduct the reports she spread, and appeared no longer to take any pains to conceal his intention of repudiating Catherine, and proclaiming the illegitimacy of the grand-duke Paul, whom it is commonly supposed was the son, not of the emperor, but of his handsome chamberlain, Soltikoff. Peter imagined that, by publishing the proofs of Catherine's infidelity, she would sink in the estimation of the people, and that his conduct would elicit the approbation, not only of his subjects, but of every court of Europe. With this view he recalled Soltikoff from Hamburg, where the latter had resided since his dismissal from the court of Elizabeth; and, loading him with caresses and benefits, put every stratagem in practice to draw from him an authentic avowal of the criminal interviews which had formerly passed between him and the empress. It was at this period that Peter visited the unfortunate prince, the dethroned Ivan III., at the fortress of Schlussemburg. It is presumed that the emperor designed to adopt Prince Ivan—to declare him his successor, and to unite him in marriage with the young Princess of Holstein-Beck, then resident at St. Petersburg, and whom he cherished as a daughter. As it may excite surprise, and perhaps incredulity, that Peter, yet in the summer of life, should adopt a stranger for his heir, it may be mentioned, that although he had an ardent passion for women, yet he

suffered from some physical disqualification which he appeared convinced incapacitated him from again becoming a father.

On leaving the cell in which the unhappy Prince Ivan was confined, the emperor directed that a new edifice should be constructed, in which the prince could be lodged in a manner more befitting his exalted rank. "Let the building," said Peter to the commandant, "run in a straight line from one wall to the other of this angle of the fort, so as to form nine rooms in front; and the rest of the space, to the extremity of the angle, may be made into a little garden, with which he may amuse himself in the air, and find some alleviation of the severity of his confinement. When the building is finished, I will come myself and put the prince in possession." This building, it was surmised, was not for the confinement of Ivan, but intended for the reception and imprisonment of Catherine after her disgrace and divorcement. The supposition, though probable, was not, however satisfactorily established. Peter caused Ivan, for the meantime, to be removed to the fortress of Kexholm, which stood on an islet in the great lake of Ladoga, and was much nearer to the imperial residence than Schlussemburg.

The suspicions of the empress were now converted into alarm. Peter dismissed her from the court, and caused her to be lodged, though not in actual confinement, in one of the most retired apartments at Peterhoff, where she passed her time in meditating how to escape from the fate that threatened her, by hurling her husband from the throne. It was here that she was assisted by one of the most active of the conspirators, her yet secret lover Gregory Orloff. This man was descended from one Ivan Orel, or Eagle, who, in the reign of Peter the Great, was a private soldier in the ranks of the Strelitz. When this body of troops was broken up in 1698, in consequence of its insubordination and repeated rebellions, an immense number of the men were beheaded; the czar himself, as we have related, occasionally acting the part of executioner. It is a current story in Russia, that this Ivan Orel, on being called to kneel down to receive his death-stroke, kicked away a head which still remained on the beam of timber on which the victims were decapitated in rows, coolly observing as he did so, "If this is my place, it ought to be clear." Peter, struck with the courage of



the man, spared his life, and placed him in a regiment of the line, where, by his bravery, he won his way to the rank of officer, which brought with it that of noble. His son rose to be governor of Novgorod, and had five sons, of whom Gregory, the lover of the empress, was one, and Alexis, who afterwards rendered himself infamous as the chief of the murderers of the unfortunate Peter III., was another.

Gregory Orloff, though he was destitute of the advantages of birth and education, yet possessed considerable courage and great personal beauty. To such an extent was he favoured by nature, that although he only possessed a post in the artillery, the Princess Kourakin, one of the handsomest women of the court, bestowed upon him her embraces. The discovery of the amour made some noise; and the curiosity of Catherine led her to wish for an acquaintance with the young officer who had become the topic of public discourse. An interview was brought about by an ingenious and unscrupulous waiting-woman, to whom Catherine confided the management of her intrigues of this nature. Gregory Orloff was introduced to the empress, and it is said that several interviews took place before he was acquainted with the name and rank of the fair lady who had bestowed her affection upon him. After a time, Catherine, pleased with the boldness and apparent discretion of her *inamorata*, disclosed to him who she was, and unveiled to him her ambitious designs. Orloff entered readily into the conspiracy, into which he soon after drew his companion Bibikoff, Lieutenant Passik, and other officers. By this means he was enabled to win over some companies of guards, though without imparting to them his secret design. Catherine's real character now rapidly disclosed itself. Not content with the attentions of her new lover Orloff, she pursued other intrigues with no less art than success. Her duenna, Ivanova, behaved with so much address, that those whom she presented to the empress, enjoyed her favours without knowing who she was. At the very time that she received the attentions of Gregory Orloff, she carried on amours with several other officers and courtiers; but as she did not expect to find in them the devotedness and genius that she required, she never disclosed her secret to them.

During this time the Princess Daschkaw kept up a correspondence from St. Peters-

burg with the empress in her retirement at Peterhoff. In this she gave an account of all that was passing at court, and suggested such means as she considered should be employed for preventing the designs of the czar. The Princess Daschkaw does not herself, in her *Memoirs*, give a satisfactory reason for the enmity which she entertained towards Peter, and the vehemence with which she participated in the conspiracy against him. "Her attachment to Catherine," says Tooke, "was not the sole motive which excited her zeal. She was principally jealous of the glorious elevation that awaited her sister; and neither the menaces of that sister and of her father, nor the authority of the chancellor her uncle, in whose house she had been brought up, were able to detach her from a party of which she fondly made it her pride to be the prime mover. She had studied the languages, and read many of the works of foreign authors, during her sojourn at Moscow, which augmented her natural vanity, and taught her to despise the ignorance of the nation to which she belonged. In the hope of arriving at the slippery honour of directing a conspiracy, she openly braved the resentment of her family: she would have braved every danger, and even boldly looked death in the face."

A considerable party was soon engaged to promote the views of the empress, chiefly through the active instrumentality of the Princess Daschkaw. Amongst them were the hetman Cyril Rasumoffski, brother of the secret husband of the late empress Elizabeth; the subtle Count Panin, tutor of the young grand-duke Paul; Prince Volkonski, major-general of the guards; and the Archbishop of Novgorod, who only waited for an opportunity of signalling his vengeance for the impotent sentence of banishment the emperor had pronounced against him. To these were added many officers, who, either disliking Peter's introduction of the Prussian drill and costume into the army, or hoping to acquire fortune in the storm of revolution, were ready to enlist in any conspiracy against the emperor.

To depose Peter was an enterprise of great danger and difficulty, and the conspirators were divided as to the manner in which it should be accomplished. Orloff, and some others, thought it best to begin by seizing on his person at Peterhoff, at the conclusion of one of those orgies which



they felt satisfied would take place on his arrival there to celebrate the anniversary of St. Peter and St. Paul. Lieutenant Passik proposed to stab him to the heart in the midst of his court; and this ruffian actually lay in ambush for two days, that he might accomplish this diabolical purpose, but without meeting him. The conspirators also differed as to who ought to succeed the czar when he should be disposed of. Orloff and the Princess Daschkaw, who were in the entire confidence of the empress, proposed that she should succeed her husband on the throne. Count Panin, and the hetman Rasumoffski, considered that she should be appointed regent, and that the title of emperor should devolve on the young grand-duke Paul.

Panin had the courage, at a meeting of the principal conspirators, to represent to Catherine the objections that existed to placing the crown upon her head. "I know, madam," said he, "what you would have, and what you are able to do; but I know also where your ambition should stop. You have repeated it a hundred times, while as yet grand-duchess, that you were only desirous of the title of mother of the emperor. Does that title at present seem too diminutive to you? You would now remove your son from the throne of Russia; but what right have you to seat yourself upon it alone? Are you of the blood of the czars? Are you even a native of the empire? Think you that this ancient and warlike nation will acknowledge for their sovereign a countess of Anhalt? Think you that they will not be incessantly plotting in favour of the descendants of Peter the Great, while one of them lies languishing at the foot of the throne, and others continue to groan in dark and loathsome dungeons? Ah, madam, give up your pretensions to what you can never obtain. Think it your greatest happiness to be able to escape the extreme danger that presses upon you; and that the only means of justifying our violent undertaking, is to convince the world that your son is, more than yourself, the object of your concern."

The conspirators were struck with the sense and firmness of this address, and, for a short time, all remained in silence. Catherine herself was the first to break it. Turning towards Panin, she said, "Count, your arguments are full of force; but they are not sufficient to produce any alteration in my sentiments. I know the Russians; and

you yourself are so well acquainted with them as to know, that, provided they are governed, they care but little about the origin of those by whom the government is administered. This nation knows of nothing but obedience, even when the hand that rules it leans heavily on it. Mentschikoff, Biren, Munich, may serve as proofs of this truth. But it is not thus that I design to reign; far from it. I shall act with lenity, with justice, and in such manner as not to give the slightest pretext to discontent. But you, who tell me of murmurs and rebellions, do you forget that it is chiefly under regencies that rebellions break out? Nay, should we ever have had a thought of that we have now been contriving, if Peter III. were capable of guiding with firmness the reins of government? You are alarmed for my son; but had you rather abandon him to the fantastic humours of a father, by whom he is already disowned, than trust his fortune to a mother who loves him? And, if I aspire to the supreme command, is it not for the welfare of that child? is it not that I may be the better able to recompense those who, like you, assist me to defend him? Doubtless, they may all rely on my everlasting gratitude; but, in order to prove it to my heart's content, I must have the power; and that power is what I expect from you." The conspirators were divided in opinion, and no absolute decision was arrived at by them. Catherine, however, discerned the motive which dictated the opposition of Count Panin. He desired to place his pupil, the grand-duke Paul, on the throne, only that he might himself occupy the second place in the empire, and govern in the imperial name.

Catherine therefore endeavoured to allure Panin to the entire advocacy of her interests, by a promise to appoint him prime minister when she ascended the throne; and it is most probable that this promise led him to adopt the advocacy of her ambitious views. It is said, however, that his conversion was effected by the Princess Daschkaw, who obtained an influence over him in consequence of an illicit passion which he entertained for her. She, however, received the declaration of his love with coldness, and gave him no hope of success. One of the conspirators named Odart, a scheming, unprincipled Piedmontese, is reported to have undertaken to remove her scruples, and that he actually



did so by representing that, if she thought it a fault to yield to the solicitations of the count, that fault would be ennobled by the motive that impelled her to commit it; that no sacrifice should seem too dear in the cause of friendship; and that it would be the triumph of heroism to brave the disgrace of making her charms subservient to her ambition. It is added, that the romantic imagination of the princess was excited by this representation, and that she consented to the proposals of the count; who thereupon withdrew all opposition to the designs of the empress. It is probable the princess did exercise some influence over the count; but we do not credit the statement that attributes a want of chastity on her part with respect to him. She herself treated the accusation with indignant scorn.\*

It was necessary to gain over the soldiers; but Catherine had not the requisite funds for bribing them. Her situation at this time was one of great danger; and had not Peter have acted with perfect infatuation in disregarding the warnings that were given him, the conspiracy must have been discovered and crushed; in which case arrest, dethronement, and perpetual imprisonment, or, perhaps, death itself, would probably have been her doom. Disregarding the intimations he received of the plot against him, the czar made ready to depart with the expedition he had prepared against Denmark. One division of the fleet equipped for this purpose remained at Cronstadt, while the other lay waiting for it at Revel. Some of the land forces were already in Pomerania, and others were on their march to join them; while the czar had fixed his own departure for the day following the festival, which, according to custom, was to be celebrated at Peterhoff, and at the end of which he designed to have the empress arrested on a charge of being implicated in the conspiracy against him.†

In the meantime the emperor, absorbed in indolent security, had gone to enjoy

\* In her *Memoirs* she says—"I seldom saw M. Odart, and not once during the three weeks preceding the revolution. I was glad to procure him a livelihood, but I never asked his advice on any occasion; and I believe he knew me a great deal too well to dare to make any such proposals to me on the part of M. Panin, as some French writers, in their libellous and senseless pamphlets, have thought fit to charge him with."

† Such was the blindness of this doomed monarch to all that was passing around him, that frequently,

himself in the company of some of the handsomest women at his court, at his country palace of Oranienbaum. The conspirators who had agreed to seize and carry him off on his return to St. Petersburg, considered it more prudent to hasten their movements, and carry this plan into execution on the appearance of the czar at Peterhoff. Suddenly, an event occurred which threatened instant discovery and destruction to all engaged in the plot. The ruffian Passik, who had offered to murder Peter, had gained the soldiers of the company of the guards in which he was lieutenant. One of them supposing that Passik did nothing but in concurrence with his captain, asked the latter on what day they were to take up arms against the emperor. The captain had the dexterity to conceal his astonishment, and, by giving vague answers to the questions of the soldier, he drew out from him the secret of the conspiracy, and at once reported it to the chancery of the regiment.

Passik was immediately arrested, and at first placed in a room, where he contrived to write with a pencil, on a scrap of paper, "Proceed to execution this instant, or we are undone." Giving this to a man who presented himself at the door, and who, though a stranger to him, the desperate nature of his situation made him trust to, he told him that if he ran with it to the hetman Rasumoffski, he would be handsomely rewarded. The fellow was a spy in the employ of the Princess Daschkaw, whose duty it was to watch Passik, and see that he did not betray his fellow-conspirators. The man, therefore, hurried with the paper to his mistress. He found her with Count Panin, who did not regard the arrest of Passik as an incident that threatened danger, but thought it was probably the consequence of some military offence. The princess entertained a different opinion, and desired Orloff to go to the barracks of the regiment, and ascertain whether Passik was guarded as a state criminal, or merely under

when in a state of partial intoxication, he talked of schemes of conquest and gave himself up to the transports of an extravagant ambition. Two days before the revolution that hurled him from the throne, he held, it is said, the following discourse:—"Of what use are all those petty sovereigns of Europe? What are they? I am resolved that, in future, there shall be but three powers in this part of the world—Russia, Prussia, and France. I will have all the north; the king of Prussia shall have all Germany; and the king of France the rest."



arrest as a military offender. The information they received was, that Passik was under arrest as a prisoner of state, guarded by four sentinels at the door, and two at each of the windows of his room.

Disguising herself in a man's great-coat, the energetic princess hurried forth, and caused orders to be conveyed to the officers in the conspiracy to repair, without a moment's delay, to their regiment, the Ismaeloffski guards, and remain at their posts in order to receive the empress at the suburbs of the city. She also desired Orloff, or one of his brothers, to fly like lightning to Peterhoff, and entreat the empress to place herself instantly in a post carriage, which she would find in readiness, and drive to the quarters of the Ismaeloffski guards, whom she would find waiting to proclaim her as sovereign, and to escort her into the capital.

After some hesitation, Alexis Orloff undertook the dangerous commission of going to bring the empress from Peterhoff. During his absence the princess yielded to the terrors of her situation. "Plunged in a desponding train of thought," she observes, "scarcely an image presented itself but of the most appalling nature. My imagination, however, constantly at work, would at some moments anticipate the triumphs of the empress; and all these pleasing illusions were hastily succeeded by others which made me shudder with horror. The least sound startled me, and presented Catherine to my view—that idol of my fancy—pale, disfigured, dying—the victim, perhaps, of our imprudence. This dreadful night, which appeared to me a whole life of suffering, at length passed away."

It was two o'clock in the morning when Catherine was roused from a profound sleep, and found a soldier standing by her bedside. To enable her the more easily to escape in the event of the discovery of the conspiracy, she had taken up her lodging at a summer-house in the grounds of the palace. At the foot of this building ran a canal, communicating with the river Neva. Near the door a small boat was fastened, as if without design, but, in reality, with the twofold object, that it might be of service in the secret visits of her favourites, and to facilitate her own escape into Sweden, should such a step become necessary. Gregory Orloff had given his brother Alexis a key to this summer-house, and he it was who had aroused the empress. "Your

majesty has not a moment to lose," he exclaimed; "get ready to follow me;" and then instantly retired.

Notwithstanding the astonishment and, perhaps, alarm which seized the empress, she called her confidant, Ivanova. They hastily dressed themselves in such a manner as to avoid being recognised by the sentinels about the palace; and no sooner had they done so than Alexis Orloff returned, and told the empress that a carriage was waiting for them at the garden-gate. It was a coach which, under pretence of having change of horses for an excursion into the country, the Princess Daschkaw had kept for several days in readiness at a house inhabited by one of her peasants, a few miles from Peterhoff, and which Orloff had sent one of his comrades to fetch.

Catherine trusted her safety to the conspirator. She and her companion reached the carriage unobserved. Orloff then took the reins, and drove off with the speed of a madman. So relentlessly did he urge the horses forward, that after a time they fell exhausted upon the road, and remained unable to move. Every effort to rouse them to renewed exertions failed; and although the distance from St. Petersburg was still considerable, such was the imminent danger of delay, that they resolved to proceed on foot. Before they had gone far they met a peasant driving a light country cart. Alexis Orloff seized the horses; the man ran away in alarm; the empress and her attendant got into the vehicle; and again they started with such speed as they could urge the animals to accomplish. Soon they were met by another carriage, containing Gregory Orloff, who, on the rack of expectation, and alarmed at the non-appearance of the empress, had hurried forth to meet her. Recognising her in an instant, he called out that the conspirators only waited for her presence to proceed to action, and then hastily drove on before to receive her at St. Petersburg. There Catherine arrived at seven in the morning, almost exhausted with fatigue and anxiety, but retaining sufficient command of herself to assume a sedate and tranquil air.

She proceeded immediately to the barracks of the Ismaeloffski guards, where, on the report of her arrival, about thirty soldiers, only half-dressed, ran out and received her with shouts of joy. Struck with alarm at seeing so small a number, Catherine remained silent for a few moments. But the



decisive step had been taken, and there was no choice but to go forward. Addressing the soldiers in a tremulous voice, she said that her danger had driven her to the necessity of coming to ask their assistance; that the czar had intended to put her to death that very night, together with her son; that she had no other means of escaping her doom but by flight; and that she had so much confidence in their dispositions as to put herself entirely in their hands.

The auditors were greatly excited at these words, and swore to defend her to the utmost of their lives. The numbers of the soldiers collected around the empress increased every moment, and before long the hetman Rasumoffski made his appearance. The chaplain of the regiment was then called, and, fetching a crucifix from the altar, he received on it the oath of the troops of fidelity to Catherine. In the tumult some voices were heard proclaiming her as regent; but these were soon stifled by the threats of the conspirators, and the far more numerous shouts of "Long live the empress!"

Other regiments of guards tacitly followed the example of those of Ismaeloffski; the officers placing themselves at the head of their companies with as much docility as if they had been engaged in the conspiracy. General Villebois and the artillery were also gained over; and in less than two hours she was followed by about 2,000 soldiers, and a great number of the inhabitants of the city, who applauded the troops, and appeared favourable to her pretensions. With these she proceeded to the church of Kazan, where the Archbishop of Novgorod (who was animated by a bitter hatred of Peter), arrayed in sacerdotal costume, and a great number of priests, stood at the altar to receive her. Placing the imperial crown upon her head, he proclaimed her sovereign of all the Russias, by the name of Catherine II., and declared the young grand-duke Paul her successor. To render this ceremony the more imposing, a *Te Deum* was chanted; the solemn sound of the music being broken in upon by the excited shouts of the multitude without. Catherine then proceeded to the palace that had been occupied by the late empress Elizabeth, where, for several hours, the crowd was indiscriminately admitted. Many of the people, under the influence of fickleness and excitement, fell on their knees before her, and took the oath of allegiance.

The conspirators were incessantly active in preparing for any resistance from the friends of the emperor, but none was offered. He seems for a time to have been perfectly ignorant of the revolution that was being effected at St. Petersburg. Such was his simplicity, that he had that morning caused a faithful officer to be arrested, who, the evening before, having had some intimation of the conspiracy, had hastened in the night to Oranienbaum to inform him of it. The emperor then set out in a calash, with his mistress, his favourites, and the women of his court, for Peterhoff, that he might be present at the grand festivities designed to take place on the following day.

The Princess Daschkaw was one of the first to congratulate the imperial traitress, who had so easily snatched the sceptre from the feeble grasp of her husband. It was with much difficulty that she contrived to reach the palace, so entirely was every approach to it blocked up by soldiers. But on being recognised by some of the officers, she was borne off the ground, and passed over the heads of all before her, until, with a giddy head and a tattered robe, she was set down safely in an antechamber. From thence she reached the presence of the empress. "We were soon," says the princess, "in each other's arms. 'Heaven be praised!' was all we could either of us for some moments utter."

After some rest and refreshment, the empress resolved on proceeding, at the head of the troops, to Peterhoff, and proposed to the princess to accompany her on the expedition. The latter joyfully consented, and they both equipped themselves in the uniform of the guards, having borrowed the requisite costume of two young officers of diminutive figure. It was on this occasion that Potemkin (afterwards so distinguished as favourite, and eventually minister of the empress, but then only a lad of sixteen, and ensign in the regiment of horse-guards), observing that Catherine had no plume in her hat, rode up, and presented her with his. The horse on which he was mounted, being accustomed to form into the squadron, was some time before it could be brought to quit the side of that of her majesty—a circumstance which afforded her an opportunity of noticing the manly grace and handsome features of him who eventually gained such an influence over her. The troops, who had been incessantly supplied with beer and brandy, expressed their pleasure



on beholding the empress in her male attire, by reiterated shouts of their national cry *hourra*, and by hurling their hats and caps into the air. One regiment of cavalry, of which Peter III. had been colonel when only grand-duke, preserved a sullen silence; but its officers, who refused obedience to Catherine, were placed under arrest, and the men were too few to offer opposition.

The emperor, while on his way to Peterhoff, was informed of the flight of Catherine. When he received the intelligence he turned pale, and betrayed considerable agitation. On arriving at Peterhoff, he ran to the pavilion that had been occupied by the empress, and, in his confusion, looked about for her as if she might have been concealed under the bed, or in one of the cupboards. Every one he met he overwhelmed with questions, but without obtaining any satisfactory information. Turning to his mistress, the Countess Vorontzoff, whom he beheld approaching up the walks of the garden, he called out "Romanovna, will you believe me now? Catherine has made her escape. I told you that she was capable of anything!" Rumours of evil passed among the servants and the women by whom Peter was surrounded, and a gloomy presentiment prevailed among them. At length a countryman approached, and, with a profound bow, delivered a note to the emperor, without uttering a single word. Peter read it to the alarmed courtiers; it was from one yet faithful to him, who had contrived to evade the guards placed on the road from St. Petersburg to Peterhoff, and send him information of all that had occurred in the capital.

Peter was greatly dejected; the courtiers uttered insincere consolations and assurances that all would yet be well; and the wily chancellor, Vorontzoff, represented that this popular excitement could not be really dangerous, and that, with the czar's permission, he would proceed to St. Petersburg, and soon return with the empress. Peter consented, and the chancellor hastened to Catherine, who assured him that she was only yielding to the ardent desires of the nation. Vorontzoff concluded by offering her his services, but begged that she would place him under a guard in his own house, that he might not seem to have abandoned his duty to the emperor. After the departure of the chancellor, Peter strode anxiously about the gardens; formed many different plans, and abandoned them as soon as he

had formed them; sometimes uttering violent imprecations against his faithless consort, and at others dictating useless manifestoes. The only really useful thing he did was to dispatch a command to the 3,000 Holstein troops whom he had left at Oranienbaum, to come immediately, and bring their artillery.

The aged Marshal Munich soon afterwards made his appearance, and offered advice which, if acted upon, might yet have effectually crushed the insurrection. "Your majesty's troops are arriving," said the veteran; "let us put ourselves at their head and march straight to St. Petersburg. You have still many friends there; immediately on your appearance they will arm in your defence. The principal part of the guards are only under a momentary alienation, into which they have been misled, and will soon range themselves under your standard. Besides, if we are forced to come to action, be assured that the rebels will not long dispute with you the palm of victory." Peter consented to follow this advice; but, before long, news arrived that the empress was approaching with an army, said to consist of 22,000 men. The courtiers trembled, the women wept, and the timid emperor seemed resolved not to expose himself to danger. Munich then urged that they should retire to Cronstadt. "You have there," said he to Peter, "a formidable fleet and a numerous garrison. It is, in short, from Cronstadt that you will find it an easy matter to bring St. Petersburg back to its duty."

Peter again consented, and two yachts were hurriedly prepared for the departure of himself and his court, who at once embarked. But this step was taken too late. Catherine, aware of the importance of securing the fleet in her favour, dispatched Admiral Talitzen to take the command of it in her name. Having obtained admission into the fortress under the supposition that he was a loyal subject of the emperor, Talitzen excited the sailors to declare for the empress, distributed money and brandy amongst them, and induced them to arrest the commandant and place him in confinement. Many of the soldiers joined the sailors, and Talitzen, assuming the command, ordered the artillery to stand with lighted matches at their guns. As soon as the yacht containing the unfortunate monarch cast anchor, a sentinel demanded, "Who comes there?" "The emperor,"



was the answer. "There is no emperor," replied the sentinel. Peter advanced on deck, and throwing back his cloak, to show the badges of his rank, exclaimed, "What! do you not know me?" A thousand voices responded simultaneously, "No, we know of no emperor. Long live the empress Catherine!" At the same time, Talitzen threatened to sink the yacht if it did not instantly retire. Gudovitch, the emperor's aide-de-camp, took his startled master by the arm, and then grasping one of the timbers at the entrance of the mole, said, "Place your hands by the side of mine, and let us leap on shore. None will dare to fire upon you, and Cronstadt will still belong to your majesty." Marshal Munich reiterated this advice; but the spiritless czar shrunk from all appearance of danger, and retreating to the cabin of the yacht, hid himself among the terrified women. The cables were then cut, and the yachts departed from Cronstadt.

It was a fine starlight night, and Munich and Gudovitch sat upon deck, gazing upon the calm surface of the sea, and reflecting sorrowfully upon the ruinous indecision of the czar. After a time the vessels were stopped, and Peter summoned Munich to his presence. "Marshal," said he to the old man, "I perceive that I was too late in following your advice; but you see to what extremities I am reduced. You, who have escaped from so many dangers, tell me, I beseech you, what I ought to do." "Proceed immediately to join the squadron at Revel," returned Munich; "there take a ship, go on to Pomerania, put yourself at the head of your army, return to Russia, and I promise you, that in six weeks St. Petersburg and all the rest of the empire will be in subjection to you." This sound advice was frustrated by the fears of the timid women and the abject courtiers, who cried out, that the rowers would never have strength to reach Revel. "Well, then," rejoined the generous Munich, "we will all row with them." Peter was more disposed to listen to the representations of the women and the women-like men who formed his companions. They persuaded him that his

danger was not so great as he imagined; that Catherine would rapidly come to an accommodation with him; and that it was better to negotiate than to fight. The czar fell in with this cowardly counsel, and gave directions to the rowers to proceed to Oranienbaum.

Peter arrived there at four in the morning; and, after commanding the servants who received him not to mention his return to any one, shut himself up in his apartments. There he wrote a submissive note to the empress, acknowledging his misconduct, and promising to share the sovereign authority with her. Catherine had no intention of sharing her newly-acquired power with any one; she therefore detained the messenger, and left the letter unanswered. At ten o'clock the emperor emerged from his apartments, and was received with enthusiastic affection by his Holstein guards. These faithful men shed tears of joy at seeing him again; they even kissed his hands and embraced his knees, and begged him to lead them against the army of the empress, declaring that, to a man, they were ready to sacrifice their lives in defence of his. Brave old Marshal Munich, also, again strove to rouse the czar to adopt some spirited course. "Come," said he, "march against the rebels. I will go before you, and their swords shall not reach you till they have pierced my body."

The pusillanimous and irresolute monarch seemed incapable of taking any bold course. Learning that the empress and her troops were still in a hostile attitude, he ordered one of his horses to be saddled, with the mad design of escaping alone, in disguise, towards the frontiers of Poland. He also wrote a second and most abject letter to Catherine, in which he implored her pardon, offered to resign to her the crown of Russia, and only desired that she would grant him a pension, with liberty to retire into Holstein.\* General Ismaeloff was the bearer of this communication; and he readily entered into the service of Catherine, and even allowed himself to be seduced into an attempt to snare Peter into her power. The traitor returned to the czar,

*bacco!*" It is not surprising that the princess, who was a woman of astonishing spirit, and one who would have faced death rather than submit to personal indignity, should have added with disgust—"But enough on the subject of this ill-fated prince, whom nature had formed for the lowest walks of life, and whom fortune had unhappily placed on a throne."

\* The unfortunate czar conducted himself with an utter absence of dignity. The Princess Daschkaw, who saw this note, says—"He declared, in distinct and express terms, his abdication of the crown; and after naming some persons whom he wished to accompany him, he spoke of the supplies necessary for his table, among which he did not forget to stipulate for a plentiful supply of Burgundy, pipes, and to-



and conjured him to abandon his troops and to repair to the empress, assuring him that he would be well received, and obtain all that he desired. Peter hesitated; but on the assurance of Ismaeloff that delay was most prejudicial to his interests, and that his life was in danger, he entered a carriage, and, accompanied by the Countess Vorontzoff, his mistress, and Gudovitch, his aide-de-camp, proceeded to Peterhoff, where the empress and her supporters were staying for a time.

Peter trusted that he would be enabled to move the heart of the empress; but he was not permitted to see her. As his carriage drove through the ranks of the army, most of the men preserved a gloomy silence, while others vociferated, "Long live Catherine; long live the empress!" The hopefulness he had encouraged was succeeded by despondency, which was greatly increased when coarse insults were added to neglect. His mistress, on stepping out of the carriage, was hurried away by the soldiers, who tore off the riband and order with which she was decorated. Gudovitch received the insults of the soldiers with a dignified tranquillity, and reproached them for their insolence and treason. As to Peter, he was led up the grand staircase, and then stripped of the imperial orders that decorated him, and even of his clothes. For some time he remained in his shirt, subjected to the outrages of a barbarous soldiery. After having robbed him of all his jewellery, they threw an old morning gown over him, and, shutting him up in a room by himself, placed a guard at the door.

There he was waited upon by Count Panin, who, after a conference of some length, in which he assured him that the empress would not keep him long in confinement, induced him to write out and sign the following form of abdication:—"During the short space of my absolute reign over the empire of Russia, I became sensible that I was not able to support so great a burden, and that my abilities were not equal to the task of governing so great an empire, either as a sovereign, or in any other capacity whatever. I also foresaw the great troubles which must thence have arisen, and have been followed with the total ruin of the empire, and my own eternal disgrace. After having, therefore, seriously reflected thereon, I declare, without constraint, and in the most solemn

manner, to the Russian empire and to the whole universe, that I for ever renounce the government of the said empire, never desiring hereafter to reign therein, either as an absolute sovereign or under any other form of government; never wishing to aspire thereto, or to use any means, of any sort, for that purpose. As a pledge of which, I swear sincerely, before God and all the world, to this present renunciation. Written and signed this 29th of June (o.s.), 1762." The imbecile monarch was thus worked upon, through the medium of his unworthy fears, to become the assassin of his own reputation; for Catherine well knew that although such an extorted document as this would not bind Peter if he had the power to disregard it, yet that it would draw upon him the contempt of the people, and bury what little was left in him of the emperor beneath a load of self-created obloquy. Peter appeared more composed in mind after he had signed the deed of renunciation, by which act of submission he believed he had purchased the favourable consideration of the false wife who had become his sovereign. He was deceived. Prudent policy united in her mind with bitter personal dislike towards him, and she had no intention of restoring him to liberty. The very evening of the day in which he had signed his abdication, he was removed, with a strong escort, as a prisoner, to the castle of Ropscha, distant about twenty versts from Peterhoff. No presentiment of coming danger, no fear of secret assassination or of open violence, seems to have struck upon the mind of the czar. He supposed that he should shortly be liberated and sent into Germany. To amuse himself during this period, he sent a message to Catherine, desiring that she would permit him to have a favourite negro, who diverted him with his singularities, together with a dog he was fond of, his violin, a bible, and a few romances; at the same time telling her that, disgusted at the wickedness of mankind, he was resolved, in future, to devote himself to a philosophical life. Perhaps this modest application never reached Catherine; certainly it was never complied with.

"Thus," it has been observed, "was a revolution of such immense importance effected in one day, and without shedding a single drop of blood. The unfortunate emperor enjoyed the power, of which he had made so imprudent and unpolitic an use, no longer than six months. His wife, with-



out any hereditary title, was sovereign mistress of the Russian empire; and the most absolute power on earth was now held by an elective monarch."

Two manifestoes were published by the empress, both filled with the strongest declarations of affection towards the Russian people, their interests, and their religion; and interspersed with such strains of piety as must have proved extremely edifying to those who are acquainted with the sentiments of pure religion by which great princes are generally animated on occasions of this nature. Enumerating, in exaggerated terms, all the faults of her fallen husband, Catherine observed—"Inconsiderately and incessantly bent on pernicious regulations, he so alienated the hearts of his subjects, that there was scarcely a single person to be found in the nation who did not openly express his disapprobation, and was even desirous to take away his life; but the laws of God, which command sovereign princes to be respected, being deeply engraved on the hearts of our faithful subjects, restrained them, and engaged them to wait with patience till the hand of God struck the important blow, and by his fall delivered an oppressed people."

The day after the removal of the dethroned Peter to the castle of Ropscha, the booming of cannon announced the triumphal entrance of Catherine, as an absolute sovereign, into St. Petersburg. The citizens, glad to have escaped from the dangers of a prolonged revolution, and the horrors of a military struggle, perhaps, in their very streets, received her with acclamations which were more noisy than sincere; for Peter had many friends in the city who would readily have declared for him if he had been bold enough to have made his appearance at the head of a small force and demanded their assistance. Now, however, the air was filled with shouts and the peals of church bells, the strains of military bands, and the dull roar of cannon, in honour of Catherine. She well understood the little arts by which popularity is won. Entering the city on horseback, she returned the shouts of the crowd by giving her hand to many of the people to kiss. Near the palace a great number of priests were assembled, and as she passed by them, she stooped to salute the cheeks of the principal clergy while they were kissing her hand; a custom which prevailed in that country, and was significant of the highest respect.

While the neglected Peter passed his time in obscurity, and almost in solitude, the empress was receiving the homage of the principal nobility, who came flocking around her, and even of the members of the little court which the dethroned czar had held at Oranienbaum. Amongst the latter was the aged Munich, who, now no longer able to aid a master who could not be induced to help himself, came to make his peace with the ruling power. Catherine, on seeing him, called out, "Field-marshal, it was you, then, who wanted to fight me?" "Yes, madam," replied the veteran in a firm and manly tone, "could I do less for the prince who delivered me from captivity? But it is henceforward my duty to fight for you; and you will find in me a fidelity equal to that with which I had devoted my services to him."

For some days Catherine laboured incessantly to ingratiate herself with the different ranks of the people. She enchanted the multitude by the sweetness of her smiles and the condescension of her manners; she attended the senate, and listened to the causes that were tried there; she held her court with a graceful and easy dignity that did much towards effacing the remembrance of the means by which she had acquired the throne; and she had audiences with all the foreign ministers, during which she addressed them in the most flattering terms. Nor did she forget the services of the conspirators who had obtained for her the sceptre she was so well able to grasp. Panin was made prime minister; the title of count was bestowed upon both Gregory and Alexis Orloff: and the former, who was for the time the favoured lover of the empress, was also appointed lieutenant-general of the Russian armies, and chevalier of St. Alexander Nevski. Promotion was bestowed upon many officers of the guards, and four-and-twenty of them obtained considerable estates. The finances of the empress were not sufficient to permit of anything further than a distribution of brandy and beer amongst the soldiers; but Catherine behaved towards them with the greatest affability. She sometimes even subjected herself to restraint to please them. A singular instance of this occurred three days after the revolution. A soldier who had drunk himself into a state of intoxicated sleep, probably at the expense of the empress, dreamed that she had been seized and carried away. Starting up under this



impression, he ran about the barracks crying out that the Holsteiners and the Prussians had got possession of the empress. The alarmed troops took up arms, and hurrying to the palace, insisted on seeing her majesty. The hetman Rasumoffski, on learning the cause of the disturbance, made his appearance at a window, and assured the soldiers that the report was a false one, and that the empress was then taking that repose which the fatigues of the few preceding days had rendered so necessary. The soldiers were not satisfied; they redoubled their clamours, and refused to retire without seeing their imperial mistress. Rasumoffski therefore went to the chamber of the empress, and causing her to be aroused, begged her not to be frightened. "You know," answered she boldly, "that I am frightened at nothing: but what is the matter?" "The soldiers imagine that you are not here," was the reply; "they insist on seeing you." "Well, they must be satisfied," responded Catherine; and hastily dressing herself, she called for her carriage, and ordered it to be driven to the Kasanskoi church. As the vehicle passed on through the crowds of soldiers, they glanced anxiously into it, exclaiming, "Is that indeed the empress? Is that indeed our mother?" On arriving at the church, she showed herself; and addressing the soldiers, thanked them for their solicitude, and dismissed them, greatly satisfied.

Catherine not only rewarded her friends, but she had the policy to forgive those whom she might have regarded as her enemies. As yet no blood was shed in this rapid revolution. Some few of the officers and friends of Peter were forbidden to appear at court, and three, including Gudovitch, the emperor's aide-de-camp, were imprisoned; but there the anger of the sovereign stopped. Peter's mistress, the Countess Vorontzoff, who had at first been roughly treated by the soldiers, was sent to the house of her father. She shortly afterwards retired to a country place in the neighbourhood of Moscow, and eventually married a M. Palianski, with whom she took up her residence at St. Petersburg. Catherine forgot the wrongs of the wife so far as to stand godmother, in person, to the eldest son of this woman. Many years afterwards her daughter, also, was nominated by the empress to be one of her maids of honour.

Peter III., though he had made himself

many enemies, had yet no small number of friends among the people, who could not long forget that he had ever been the friend of the poor, and to whom he was perhaps even endeared by that very vulgarity of manners which had disgusted so many of his nobles and courtiers. The revolution had been almost too rapid for its endurance, and the safety of those engaged in it. A reaction took place in favour of the deposed monarch, and his clemency was remembered, while his vices were forgotten. The people pitied his sad reverse of fortune; and, even in the army, some regiments murmured, and began to repent the part they had taken against their lawful sovereign. As to the sailors, they openly reproached the guards that they had sold their master for brandy and beer. Men seemed as if aroused from a sense of intoxication, and, reflecting gloomily upon what had passed, they doubted the probity and wisdom of their own conduct. It was observed that many of the citizens who had been exceedingly active in the tumult of the revolution, were seized with a deep and painful remorse, and lamented the sufferings they had brought upon their monarch. Many of the soldiers, accusing themselves of treason towards their deposed master, cursed those who had led them into it. From abuse and imprecations they proceeded to blows, and several lives were lost in the furious altercations which took place. It only wanted some able and resolute leader to have replaced Peter on the throne from which, but a few days before, he had been so suddenly precipitated; and the minds of the conspirators were filled with apprehensions of a new insurrection.

While discontent prevailed at St. Petersburg, a still more dangerous state of feeling existed among the military at Moscow. The governor of that ancient city, on hearing of the revolution which had placed Catherine on the throne, assembled the troops there, consisting of five regiments, in the great square before the palace of the czars. He at the same time invoked the presence of the people, who assembled in immense crowds. Having read the ukase by which the empress announced her accession and the abdication of her husband, he shouted, "Long live the empress, Catherine II.!" No response followed either from people or soldiers, and a sullen and ominous silence prevailed. This was at length broken by low murmurs, and then the troops, gaining



courage, complained that the regiments of the guards had insolently dared to dispose of the throne. The startled governor then called upon the officers to join the cry of "Long live the empress!" and, having done so, the multitude was dismissed, and the soldiers marched back to their barracks.

Catherine felt much uneasiness and alarm at these indications of popular feeling, so threatening to her interest. To such an extent was she haunted by the spectres of her imagination during this period, that sleep scarcely afforded her any repose; and several times in the course of the night she would quit her bed, and occasionally even her palace. It was not difficult to foresee to what dark catastrophe such a temper on the part of the people, and such a state of mind on the part of the sovereign, would eventually lead.

The deposed emperor had been placed in the custody of Count Alexis Orloff and the two brothers Baratinski, one of whom was marshal of the court, and the other was afterwards sent as envoy from Russia to the court of France. Peter had been six days in his obscure retreat, when Alexis Orloff, and an officer named Teploff, entered his apartment, assured him of his speedy liberation, and requested permission to dine with him. The unsuspecting monarch readily consented, and, according to the Russian custom, wine-glasses and brandy were brought in before dinner. While Teploff amused the czar with some trifling discourse, Orloff secretly poured some poison into the glass intended for the czar. Peter drank the deadly potion offered to him without mistrust, and was immediately seized with most acute pains. The assassins offered him a second glass, saying that it would give him relief; but the unhappy man, who then discerned their diabolical object, refused it, and burst into reproaches against them. Racked with pain, he called loudly for milk, when the two monsters offered him poison again, and urged him to take it. Attracted by the noise, a French valet, to whom Peter was much attached, ran into the apartment. The czar threw himself into the arms of his servant, and said, in a faint voice, "It was not enough, then, to prevent me from reigning in Sweden, and to deprive me of the crown of Russia! I must also be put to death!"

The valet interceded for his master, but the murderers forced the man from the apartment, and renewed their ill-treatment

of the czar. A struggle followed, during which the younger of the brothers Baratinski entered. Orloff, who was a man of great strength, had thrown the emperor on to the ground, and was kneeling upon his breast with both knees, while with one hand he firmly grasped his throat. Peter struggled with the force arising from despair, and inflicted a mark on the face of Baratinski, which that villain long retained; but he was rapidly losing strength, when the other ruffians, throwing a napkin round his neck, terminated his life by strangulation.

Some writers have expressed a belief that the empress Catherine was not implicated in this revolting murder; but it is difficult to arrive at that conclusion. Perhaps the crime was not committed in consequence of any command from her; but the assassins evidently knew that its commission would be agreeable to her. The fact that she attempted to conceal the cause of her husband's death, and so far from punishing the murderers, retained them in her service and her favour, is sufficient evidence that she sanctioned the crime, if she did not command it. The Princess Daschkaw, though evidently struggling at the time with a suspicion she had much difficulty in repressing, yet vehemently denies that the empress directed or connived at the murder. Her own language, however, shows that she was not so satisfied on this point as she desires her readers to believe. "I was shocked," she observed, "at the news of this catastrophe—so indignant at such a winding up of this *glorious*\* revolution, that, although I spurned the idea of the empress being in any degree an accomplice in the crime of Alexis Orloff, I could not bring myself to enter the palace until the following day. I then found the empress with a dejected air, visibly labouring under much uneasiness of mind. These were her words when she addressed me:—'My horror at this death is inexpressible; it is a blow which strikes me to the earth.' 'It is a death too sudden, madam,' replied I, 'for your glory, and for mine.'"

No sooner was the murder effected, than Alexis Orloff mounted his horse, and dashed off at full speed to inform the empress that her husband had breathed his last. He imparted the news to her just as she was about to make her appearance at court.

\* Perhaps *infamous* would be a more appropriate epithet.



She received it tranquilly, and then, shutting herself up with Panin, Gregory Orloff, Rasumoffski, and some other of her ministers, she deliberated with them whether the senate and the people should be immediately acquainted with the death of the emperor, or the news withheld until the following day. The latter plan was adopted as the most prudent one; and Catherine, wearing her customary smiles, dined in public as usual, and held a court in the evening.

The following day it was publicly announced that the emperor was dead. The information was communicated to the court while Catherine was at table. Rising from her seat, with her eyes full of tears, she dismissed her courtiers and the foreign ministers, and, retiring to her apartment, appeared for several days to be plunged in the most profound grief. During this time she published the following declaration:—"By the grace of God, Catherine II., empress and autocratrix, &c. \* \* \* The seventh day after our accession to the throne of all the Russias, we received information that the late emperor, Peter III., by means of a disorder to which he was subject, was attacked with a most violent griping cholic. That, therefore, we might not be wanting in Christian duty, nor disobedient to the Divine command by which we are enjoined to preserve the life of our neighbour, we immediately ordered that the said Peter should be furnished with everything that might be judged necessary to prevent the dangerous consequences of that accident, and to restore his health by the aids of medicine. But, to our great regret and affliction, we were yesterday evening apprised that, by the permission of the Almighty, the late emperor departed this life. We have therefore ordered his body to be conveyed to the monastery of Nevski, in order to its interment in that place. At the same time, with our imperial and maternal voice, we exhort our faithful subjects to forgive and forget what is past, to pay the last duties to his body, and to pray to God sincerely for the repose of his soul; willing them, however, to consider this unexpected and sudden death as an especial effect of the providence of God, whose impenetrable decrees are working for us, for our throne, and for our country, things known only to His holy will."

The body of the murdered emperor was brought to St. Petersburg, and exhibited for three days in an open coffin in the

church of the monastery of St. Alexander Nevski. The deceased was attired in his Prussian uniform, and, according to custom, persons of all ranks were admitted to kiss his hand. But even the corpse seemed to bear silent witness to the manner in which the life of the unfortunate czar was terminated. The face was nearly black; extravasated blood oozed through the skin, and even stained the gloves worn by the body. So violent was the poison administered, that some persons who, from motives of affection, kissed the mouth of the dead czar, returned with swollen lips. Catherine and her ministers were aware that such dreadful intimations might lead to a discovery of the means by which the unhappy monarch had been deprived of life; but they were less interested in saving appearances, than in preventing the excitement which would have arisen in the event of a supposition getting abroad among the people that Peter was still living. On the 21st of July, the very day that the late emperor had fixed for his departure on the expedition against Denmark, his body was consigned to a grave within the church; but no monument, or even inscription, was placed to mark the spot. The court of Sweden went into mourning for him; but in no other nation was much sympathy shown for his tragic fate. The Russian people pitied their murdered czar; and the day of his funeral was a melancholy one in St. Petersburg. Masses of the people thronged around the church, and reproached the soldiers of the guards with having basely shed the last drop of the blood of Peter the Great.

The character of Peter III. cannot command our respect, but his dismal fate excites our pity. He was misplaced in life, and had neither the mind nor manners requisite for one holding so exalted and highly responsible a station. Vulgar in his demeanour, sensual in his habits, and trifling in his behaviour, he lacked even the ordinary refinement of a private gentleman. It is probable that he gave way to coarse and unbecoming manners, and selected vulgar associates in imitation of Peter the Great; but that illustrious man, who redeemed all his vices by far greater virtues as a ruler, could venture on acts which it was dangerous for common men to perform. The deposed czar, though painfully deficient in energy and resolution, and totally unable to confound his enemies by the exhibition of a commanding will that



would brook no opposition, or a subtle intellect capable of detecting and frustrating their schemes, yet had the imprudence to effect with rapidity a change, with respect to the property of the church, more sweeping than that which his wise ancestor had considered it well to delay until the latter phase of his reign. The great wants of Peter III. were the lack of discretion, by which he was led into danger, and the lack of a courage which would have extricated him from it. During his latter days, contempt for his cowardice often checks the rising pity which we feel for his misfortunes. It has been conjectured that he was of unsound mind, but we do not think that this supposition can be at all established. He was mentally feeble, and rather eccentric; but a weak mind is not a diseased one; nor is the extravagance of conduct which arises from want of reflection, and from frequent intemperance, to be dignified with the name of madness. Yet Peter had gleams of light in the ordinary dimness of his mental faculties. He saw desirable results, but had no clear idea of the manner in which they were to be arrived at. During his brief sway he effected many valuable reforms, and it cannot be doubted that he would have accomplished many more had his reign been prolonged. Personally, he was amiable even to a fault; and most of those who composed his more intimate circle of acquaintance were much attached to him. His gentleness was in excess for a monarch, for he was deficient of the sternness required to crush an enemy or punish a traitor. His conduct to Catherine

was, however, an exception to the amiability of character usual with him: from the first he subjected her to occasional rudeness and neglect, and contrived to convert her indifference, first into disgust, and then into fear and hatred. Yet, beyond petty vices, he committed no crime; his intentions were benevolent, though they were mostly deformed by that thoughtlessness and utter want of discretion which enabled a few obscure conspirators to hurl him from his throne, and led him to that tragic death by which he obtained a place among those illustrious unfortunates of the earth who must ever be regarded with deep emotions of pity.

Frederic of Prussia, who had foreseen the probable fate of the unfortunate Peter III., and endeavoured, by the frequent offer of good advice, to prevent it, formed a tolerably accurate estimate of his character. Shortly after the revolution, the Prussian monarch thus wrote to Count Finkenstein, one of his favourites:—"The emperor of Russia has been dethroned by his consort: it was to be expected. That princess has much good sense, and the same inclinations as the defunct. She has no religion, but acts the devotee. It is the second volume of Zeno, the Greek emperor, of his wife Adriana, and of Mary de Medicis. The late chancellor, Bestuchef, was her greatest favourite, and as he has a strong propensity to guineas, I flatter myself that the attachments of the present period will be the same. The poor emperor wanted to imitate Peter I., but he had not the capacity for it."

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

THE EMPRESS CATHERINE CONFIRMS THE PEACE WITH PRUSSIA; HER CORONATION AT MOSCOW; SHE REFUSES TO RESTORE THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH; DANGEROUS INSURRECTIONS, AND INTREPIDITY OF THE EMPRESS; GREGORY ORLOFF; REFORMS EFFECTED BY CATHERINE, AND MILDNESS OF HER ADMINISTRATION; SHE INVITES FOREIGNERS TO COME TO RUSSIA, AND PRESENTS THEM WITH LAND; COUNT PANIN DESIRES HER TO SURRENDER HER ABSOLUTE POWER INTO THE HANDS OF AN ARISTOCRATIC SENATE; INTRIGUE TO INDUCE HER TO MARRY HER FAVOURITE ORLOFF, AND CONSEQUENT IRRITATION OF THE PEOPLE; TERMINATION OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

It was supposed that the peace and alliance which the late emperor had concluded with Prussia would not long be observed by Catherine. It was unpopular throughout the empire; and as none of the conquests which Peter had stipulated to restore to

Frederic were yet abandoned by the Russian troops, they might yet be retained in the event of a renewal of hostilities being determined upon. Catherine was tempted to pursue this course, but chiefly because she believed that Frederic had encouraged the



late emperor in the severe measures he contemplated against her. When, however, she discovered some letters among the papers of her late husband, counselling him to act with more consideration and kindness towards his consort, she abandoned her intention of renewing the war. She was indeed fully aware that the crown as yet stood so loosely upon her head, that it was wise to confine her attention for a time almost entirely to her own safety. She saw that it was expedient to collect within itself all the forces of the empire, that she should be able to oppose the designs of malcontents who might venture on some attempt to revenge the fate of the late czar, or seek their own advancement in the tumult of a fresh revolution. Under these circumstances, she informed the ministers of the king of Prussia, "that she was resolved to observe inviolably, in all points, the perpetual peace concluded under the preceding reign; that, nevertheless, she had thought proper to bring back to Russia, by the nearest roads, all her troops in Silesia, Prussia, and Pomerania."

Towards the empress-queen, Maria Theresa, Catherine behaved with coldness. Louis XV., of France, who had calculated on deriving advantage from her supposed attachment to his country, was surprised at discovering that, notwithstanding her admiration of French literature, she manifested a feeling of aversion towards the court of Versailles. Mr. Keith, the English ambassador, though he did not enjoy the same freedom of access to the empress to which his predecessor was admitted, was treated as the minister of a friendly power, and Catherine soon renewed the treaty which had given to England the chief part of the commerce of Russia. To the king of Denmark, against whom the Russian troops were on their march at the time of the revolution by which Peter was deposed, she gave the assurance that he might make himself easy on the subject of Holstein, as it was her intention always to keep up a good understanding with him. Catherine was wisely desirous of establishing peace abroad, that she might preserve it within the empire, for she knew that she had more to fear from her own subjects than from foreign potentates.

The distribution of bribes and brandy among the soldiery at Moscow effected some change in their feelings towards the empress, and it was difficult for them to refuse to acknowledge so liberal a sovereign. Catherine,

therefore, started for that city, for the purpose of celebrating her coronation in the ancient capital of the empire. She took with her, as her attendants, Gregory Orloff, whose influence was daily increasing; the old chancellor, Bestuchef, whom she had recalled from exile; the greater part of the nobles who had shown themselves devoted to her interest, the principal ladies of the court, and the young Grand-duke Paul. She bestowed the government of St. Petersburg, during her absence, on Count Bruce, of whose fidelity she felt satisfied; while the regiments of the guards, to whom, before leaving, she gave further assurances of her approbation, she left under the command of the hetman Rasumoffski and Prince Volkonski, while Alexis Orloff was charged to watch over all with his usual activity.

Catherine and her court entered Moscow with great pomp, were she was, notwithstanding, received with much coldness. Few acclamations welcomed her; and those shouts which were raised at her appearance were suspected of being purchased. Silent as the people mostly were at the presence of the empress, they hailed the appearance of the young Grand-duke Paul, and showed, by the affection they displayed towards him, their regret for the misfortunes of his father. Catherine was crowned at the chapel of the czars on the 22nd of September, in the presence of the soldiers and the court. She lavished the most attractive flatteries on the archbishop and the priests, and prolonged festivities were held for the gratification of the people. She also issued a proclamation, praising the troops that had fought against Prussia, and awarded half a year's pay to the subalterns and common soldiers who had been present at the victories obtained over the armies of that state. Her friends also were gratified by a number of promotions and presents; and the empress herself assumed the rank of colonel in each of the four regiments of life-guards. Yet all these arts did not win the people or soldiers into the expression of any enthusiasm; and Catherine soon left Moscow in disgust, and returned to St. Petersburg.

The empress had other difficulties to surmount before she was firmly seated upon the throne at which she had arrived by such sinister and tortuous ways. But she felt, and soon proved, herself equal to the dangerous task. It was not only because the priesthood were deceived by her habits of assumed devotion that they had favoured



the revolution which deposed her husband and placed the sceptre in her hand. They expected to obtain, as a return for their services, the restoration of the possessions of which Peter III. had deprived them; and they now reminded her of the promises she had made to that effect. Catherine had sought popularity by joining in the outcry against the spoliation of the church; but still she secretly knew that it was prudent to reduce the great wealth and consequent power of the priesthood, which had been, and might again be, employed against the person or interests of the sovereign. She therefore resolved to profit by the very deed she had denounced as sacrilege: her rash husband had incurred the odium of the act, and she determined on reaping the benefit arising from it. Instead, therefore, of revoking the edict of Peter III., she referred it to the examination of a synod, composed of prelates whom she took care should be implicitly subservient to her will. The opposition of the principal members of the clergy was then disarmed by the secret distribution of heavy bribes, and the interests of the rest were sacrificed.

The great mass of the priests were accordingly actuated by a feeling of fury against the empress; and as they had assisted to place her on the throne, they resolved on seeing if their influence could not prevail to hurl her from it. Wherever discontent existed among the populace, there they fanned the embers of sedition, and they succeeded, in some measure, in introducing an insurrectionary feeling among the soldiers. They declared that the imprisoned prince, Ivan, was the only lawful heir to the throne; and they found, or, what is far more probable, forged, the copy of a manifesto, which it was said Peter III. had caused to be drawn up, and then signed with his own hand. In it he enumerated all the weaknesses and faults of Catherine, accused her of adultery, and declared that he would not acknowledge the young grand-duke for his son, since he was the fruit of the scandalous commerce of his wife with Soltikoff. The exasperated priests dispersed copies of this document amongst the people and the soldiers, of whom many repented the part they had taken in the recent revolution, and pitied the sad fate of a prince whose life had paid the penalty of his errors.

Many were soon disposed to avenge the fate of one whom they could not restore; and there was some danger of a new revolu-

tion. But Catherine was far more vigilant than her ill-fated husband, and her emissaries quickly discerned the signs and the sources of the spreading discontent. An imperial proclamation was issued, forbidding the soldiers of the guards to assemble, except on receiving orders to do so from their officers. Some, whose violence had betrayed them, were arrested, and suffered the punishment of the knout, or were banished to Siberia. As an intimation to the priesthood, the empress also dismissed the Archbishop of Novgorod from the court, and he retired, with a heart bursting with rage, to the clergy, who hated him for having sold their interests. Several of the officers and courtiers also experienced the displeasure of Catherine, and were compelled to retire from their posts.

But the spirit of insurrection, though encountered, was not suppressed. The priests were still active in exciting discontent among the people and the soldiery. They were so far successful, that great disturbances prevailed in the barracks; and the danger became so serious, that for a whole day it was regarded as probable that the empress would experience a fate similar to that of her husband. But the high spirit of Catherine never forsook her; and without calling her council, she took private measures for calming the revolt. On her ministers testifying their uneasiness, she spoke to them with great confidence, and with a dignity that was peculiar to her. "Why are you alarmed?" she inquired. "Think you that I am afraid to face the danger, or rather, are you afraid that I know not how to overcome it? Recollect that you have seen me, in moments more terrible than these, in full possession of the whole vigour of my mind; and that I can support the most cruel reverses of fortune with as much serenity as I have supported her favours. A few factious spirits, a few mutinous soldiers, are to deprive me of a crown that I *accepted with reluctance*, and only as the means of delivering the Russian nation from the miseries with which it was threatened! I know not with what pretence they colour their insolence; I know not on what means they rely; but, I say it again, they cause me no alarm. That Providence which has called me to reign, will preserve for me the glory and the happiness of the empire; and that Almighty arm which has hitherto been my defence, will now confound my foes."



The two Orloffs were incessantly active in pacifying the guards by presents and promises; and when they had succeeded in reducing the prevalent irritation, four-and-twenty of the disaffected officers were arrested and placed on their trial for high treason. Four of them were declared guilty, and condemned to be quartered; but Catherine, who desired rather to awe than to punish, mitigated the terrible sentence into banishment to Siberia, though, prior to their expatriation, the offenders were scourged by the hand of the common executioner. Combining policy with firmness, the empress stooped to soothe the most dangerous of the priests, and contrived to stop the cabals of the monks. The soldiers and people soon discovered that they were ruled by a vigorous hand, and they learned, first submission, and eventually admiration. Catherine delighted the young and gay among her courtiers by her attachment to pleasure; and the older and more grave of them by her devotion to the business of the state. She assisted at all the deliberations of the council; read the despatches from her ambassadors; dictated the answers that were to be sent to them; and took every pains to observe that her commands were executed. Aiming at the acquisition of fame as well as that of power, she contemplated the example of those illustrious monarchs who, by the grandeur of their actions, effaced the memory of their crimes or follies. She saw that elevation of purpose and firmness of execution were essential to the character of a great ruler. "We should be constant in our plans," she would observe; "it is better to do amiss than to alter our purpose. None but fools are irresolute."

Among the courtiers who incurred the displeasure of the empress was her friend, as she called her, the Princess Daschkaw. A mutual aversion existed between this lady and the two Orloffs, who doubtless misrepresented her to Catherine. The empress had refused to the princess the title of colonel in the Presbrazinski guards, which carried with it certain social distinctions she was anxious to possess. The princess murmured at the ingratitude of her imperial mistress, to whose ears her complaints were carried. The latter first warned the princess, and afterwards kept her at a distance. Desirous of throwing as much light as possible on the interesting subject of the personal character of Catherine, we will quote a passage from the

*Memoirs* of the princess, having reference to this period:—"As the days of my illusions," she observes, "respecting the friendship of sovereigns are about to cease, I may be allowed to dwell a moment longer on the recollection of those hours of intimacy which the fascinating powers of the empress could often diversify with the sportiveness of childhood itself. I was enthusiastically fond of music, but she was far from being so; and Prince Daschkaw, though with some taste for it, was as little of a performer as the empress. She was, nevertheless, fond of hearing me sing; and sometimes, when I had done, secretly passing a sign across to Prince Daschkaw, she would gravely propose a duet; which she used to call the music of the spheres, and which, without either of them knowing how to sing a note, they both performed in concert. A sudden burst of the most exalted and ridiculously discordant tones was the consequence; one seconding the other with scientific shrugs, and all the solemn, self-complacent airs and grimaces of musicians. From this, perhaps, she passed to the cat concert, and imitated the purring of poor puss in the most droll and ludicrous manner, always taking care to add appropriate half-comic, half-sentimental words, which she invented for the occasion; or else, spitting like a cat in a passion, with her back up, she suddenly boxed the first person in her way, making up her hand into a paw, and mewing so outrageously, that instead of the great Catherine, nothing but the wrongs of a grimalkin remained upon one's mind. I really believe there never was any one in the world, and certainly never any sovereign, who equalled her in the magic versatility of her mind, the exhaustless variety of her resources, and, above all, the enchantment of her manner; that in itself could give a lustre to the commonest words and most trifling matters."

Catherine's Polish lover, Poniatowski, had kept up a correspondence with her; while she, on her part, affected a romantic constancy in her attachment towards him. Delighted at the exaltation of the empress to the throne, he advanced to the frontiers of Poland, and requested the permission of her majesty to pay a visit to her court. Catherine, who had long transferred her favours to Gregory Orloff, answered that his presence was not necessary at St. Petersburg, and that she had different views in his behalf. Yet, unwilling that he should



be informed of her new connections, she continued to write to him in an affectionate style, and sometimes even carried her dissimulation so far, as to shed tears when in the presence of his confidants. Orloff, however, had no scruples, and no longer concealed the intimacy which existed between him and the empress. As he did not now fear the result of the discovery of his amour, he would not submit to any inconvenient precaution to prevent its disclosure. Coarse in his manners, he even, when in his cups, boasted of his influence over the empress, and his power in the state. Such was the arrogance of this man, and the favour with which she regarded him, that she even permitted insolence from him to pass by unregarded. One evening, when he was at supper with the empress, the hetman Rasumoffski, and some others of the court, he talked of the influence he had over the guards, and boasted of his having solely brought about the revolution; adding, "that his power was so great, that if he chose to abuse it, he could in one month destroy his own work, and dethrone the empress." The courtiers looked offended, and the hetman thus rebuked the braggart:—"You might do so in one month; but, my friend, within a fortnight afterwards we should have hanged you!" Catherine did not resent Orloff's rudeness: she knew the value of his services; and the attachment which commenced in affection, and still had an influence over her, she maintained inviolate through policy.

When early dangers were past, the empress did not relax her efforts for the conciliation of her subjects. Most of the reforms that Peter III. decreed, she sanctioned and caused to be carried into execution. She confirmed the abolition of the secret inquisition chancery, and commanded that all its acts should be brought into the senate, "and there sealed up in the archives consigned to everlasting oblivion." She also ordained that torture should never be employed in the examination of criminals. It must be acknowledged that Catherine, with all her faults, was not a severe or cruel sovereign: a spirit of mildness was usually exercised in the administration of the laws; and throughout her reign, the punishment of death was rarely inflicted. She devoted herself with great assiduity to the administration of her vast estates, the advancement of commerce, the augmentation of the navy, and to the means of recovering the finances

of the empire from those derangements into which they had fallen. She published a manifesto, assuring foreigners that they should find welcome and support in her dominions, and instituted a court especially for their protection. She pointed out to them unoccupied districts adapted for cultivation, and offered free lands, sufficient for some hundred farms, to foreigners who would come to Russia and cultivate them. Not agriculturists alone, but merchants, artificers, and workmen of any kind were invited. The proclamation is in some respects curious; and the example of the empress might be advantageously followed by some states in Europe, and especially in Asia, at the present time. The document set forth, that "any one who is destitute shall receive money for the expenses of the journey, and shall be forwarded at the charge of the crown. On his arrival, he shall receive a competent assistance; and, if he want it, even an advance of a capital, free of interest for ten years. All that he brings for his own use is duty free; even for sale, a family may introduce to the value of 300 roubles. The stranger is exempt from all service, either military or civil; even from all taxes and imposts for a certain time: in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and the Livonian towns, he enjoys five free years; in the inland towns, ten; on the hitherto uncultivated districts, thirty. In these new tracts of land, the colonists live according to their own good-will, under their own jurisdiction, without any participation or cognizance of the imperial officers. ALL RELIGIONS ARE TOLERATED."

This proclamation was the cause of an extensive immigration, chiefly from the German states, though settlers came also from Poland, Sweden, and even from France. Thousands of Germans, dissatisfied with their government and the religion to which they were forced to conform, hastened to accept the invitation of the empress. Obscure literary men, artificers, mechanics, projectors, vagabonds, and beggars, old and young, set out in haste to take ship at Lübeck and other Baltic ports. Some of the petty sovereigns of Germany issued prohibitions against these emigrations, which they regarded with a jealous and uneasy feeling, forgetful that, in many instances, it was their misgovernment which had driven their subjects to seek a home in a foreign land. But after many thousand families had settled in Russia, the movement received a check by the



reports sent back by the colonists themselves. Starting with inordinate expectations, they naturally experienced a sense of disappointment. Ignorant of the language of the country, feeling the want of their customary accommodation, and sometimes exposed to the harshness of persons in office, many repented the step they had taken. Others, who only wanted to live in idleness, wondered that they were to begin again to work, as it was exactly on that very account that they had abandoned their native country. Catherine, however, succeeded in planting a population in districts which had been hitherto uninhabited; and although many of the new-comers were but the offscourings of neighbouring states, and, perhaps, never became industrious and estimable subjects, yet, in the next generation, they probably became respectable, and, in the one following, were merged into the general population of the empire. Catherine also encouraged many tribes from the east of Europe and from Asia, who were dissatisfied with their position or governments, to come and settle in her dominions. Fully aware that the latent power of Russia could only be developed as its population increased, and also with a view to eradicate a physical and moral cause of depopulation, she erected a foundling and lying-in hospital at Moscow, and also another at St. Petersburg. In the November of the year in which she ascended the throne (1762), she also founded the medicinal college of the empire at St. Petersburg.

Catherine had a correct estimate of her own peculiar talents, and of the influence she was likely to exercise on the empire and on Europe. In conversing with a foreign minister who had complimented her on her political sagacity, she observed—"You think, then, that Europe has, at present, its eyes fixed on me, and that I have some weight in the principal courts?" The answer could not fail to be in the affirmative. "I believe, indeed," she continued, with that imperial dignity of manner which she could assume with so much ease, "that Russia merits attention. I have the finest army in the world. I am rather short of money, it is true; but I shall be abundantly provided with it in a few years. If I gave the reins to my inclination, I should have a greater taste for war than for peace; but I am restrained by humanity, justice, and reason. However, I shall not be like the empress Elizabeth. I shall not allow my-

self to be pressed to make war. I shall enter upon it when it will prove advantageous to me; but never from complaisance to others." Catherine added, that the world could not properly begin to form a judgment of her until five years had elapsed, as it required at least that time to reduce her empire to order, and to gather the fruit of her care.

The empress was frequently reminded that the people had not forgotten the tragic death of her unhappy husband. Petty conspiracies frequently broke out; and although they were detected and defeated by the vigilance of her government, yet Catherine knew that it was impossible to remove the cause of them, and she frequently suffered much uneasiness in consequence. Anxious to conciliate her people, and to cause them to forget the past, she neglected no means of winning their attachment. Though generous by nature, she was still more so by policy. She also acted with kindness to the friends of the deceased emperor, and released from prison those few of his immediate adherents who had been sent there on account of their exertions in his favour.

Another source of grief to the empress was, that the most distinguished of the Russian nobles held aloof from her court. Disgusted with the arrogance of Gregory Orloff, and jealous of his influence over the empress, they would not mix in an arena where he was paramount. The courtiers of Catherine were mostly rough soldiers who had taken part in the conspiracy, and now abused the claims they imagined they had to her gratitude. She would willingly have dismissed many of them from her presence, but that she knew not how soon and how urgently she might require their services. Occasionally she blushed at the deference she felt compelled to show them; and to excuse their defects of manners, she attributed to them a fidelity which many were far from possessing. "The life I lead is far from agreeable to me," said she one day; "I know that I am surrounded by people of no education; but that I am indebted to them for being what I am. They are men of courage and probity, and I am sure that they will never betray me."

Count Panin was almost the only one of the courtiers of Catherine, at this time, who was distinguished by polished manners and a cultivated mind. But Panin injured his influence with the empress by preferring his own ambition to her interests. He had



desired Peter III. to place the real power of the empire in the hands of an aristocratic senate, and to resign the absolute power which was supposed to reside in the hands of the czar. Panin's scheme would have rendered the nobles independent of the sovereign, and have placed the people under the rule of many tyrants instead of one; yet he endeavoured to induce Catherine to adopt it. Observing, one day, that she laboured under some anxiety in consequence of the dangers to which her position exposed her, he took the opportunity of explaining to her the principles of the system of government which he desired to see established. "The sovereigns of this empire," he remarked, "have hitherto uniformly enjoyed an unlimited power; but it is the very extent of that power which renders it dangerous to him in whom it is lodged, since it may at any time be usurped by some bold pretender, and the usurper is thenceforth above the laws. Trust me, madam, make the sacrifice of an absolute authority. Create a fixed and permanent council, which will secure to you the crown. Solemnly declare that you renounce, for yourself and for your successors, the power of depriving at pleasure the members of that august body. Declare, that if they commit any crime or high misdemeanor, their peers alone shall have the right to judge and to condemn them, on accurate and severe informations. From the moment you shall adopt this prudent measure, it will be forgotten that you obtained the crown by violence, in the sentiment that you intend to preserve it only by justice." Catherine was at first pleased with the novelty of the idea, and the hope that, by adopting it, she would render her name illustrious, and conciliate the love of her subjects. She told her minister to commit his plan to paper, and implied that she might probably adopt it. Reflection, however, convinced her that to do so would be to divide the authority it had cost her so much to acquire, and which she would never recover if she once suffered to be taken from her. In a subsequent interview with Panin, she praised him for his zeal in her service, but said that it was impossible she could adopt his suggestions. "If the empress is determined to rule alone," said the disappointed minister to his friends, "you will see what a sad reign we shall make of it." But Panin had not yet formed a correct estimate of the abilities of his imperial mistress.

Before long, Catherine had another dangerous proposal made to her, which, also, she had the discretion to decline. The aged ex-chancellor, Bestuchef, with the object of rendering himself of more importance in the state, and probably sinking into dotage, informed the favourite Orloff that he should be glad to see him emperor. With all the subtle eloquence he possessed, the old statesman urged his listener to aspire to the hand of his mistress. "She knows," he observed, "with how much zeal and intrepidity you have acted in her service. She knows from what dangers you freed her to invest her with a sovereign power. She cannot, then, worthily reward you but by giving you a share in that throne which she owes to your prowess. Indeed, why should she refuse it? Who is better able than you to support that throne against all attempts of conspirators to overturn it? Who would be more agreeable to the sovereign in the twofold capacity of her admirer and her defender?" Orloff was delighted, and, embracing the ex-chancellor, promised to do whatever he desired.

Bestuchef soon sounded the empress on the subject; but Catherine answered, that even if she was inclined to favour the proposal, she could never resolve on taking a step that might meet with so many difficulties. To obviate these, the ex-chancellor proposed a petition in the name of the Russian empire, in which, after eulogising all that the empress had done for the happiness of her people, he referred to the feeble constitution of the young Grand-duke Paul, and the anxieties caused by the frequent alterations in his health, and conjured Catherine to give the empire an additional testimony of her love, by sacrificing her own liberty to its welfare in taking a husband. Perhaps, notwithstanding its obvious imprudence, Catherine might have been disposed to accede to the design; for she induced Maria Theresa, the empress-queen, to dignify Orloff by the grant of a diploma of prince of the empire, which it was her own intention to follow up by decorating him with the titles of Duke of Ingria and of Carelia.

The ex-chancellor presented the petition to the clergy, and induced twelve bishops to put their signatures to it, specifying that the empress ought not to marry Prince Ivan (whom Bestuchef had artfully proposed as her husband, merely for the purpose of at first concealing his object), and



adding a request that her majesty would condescend to choose, from among her own subjects, him whom she might deem most worthy to participate in her throne. A great number of general officers adhered to the sentiment of the bishops; but when Bestuchef made known his proposition to the chancellor Vorontzoff, the latter interrupted him by saying, "By what conduct have I merited the degradation of such a confidence as you now dare to propose." Then, leaving the room, he ordered his carriage, and hurrying to the empress, remonstrated with her against the indecency and danger of such a proceeding, advising her to retain Orloff, if such was her pleasure, as her lover, and to load him even with riches and honours; but not to think for a moment of a marriage which could only disgrace herself and the nation. Catherine probably saw the peril of the step which, it appears, she contemplated, and answered, "I never authorised that intriguing old man to do what he has done; and as to yourself, I discover in the frankness and loyalty of your conduct, too much attachment to my person ever to mistake its motive." Count Panin and the hetman Rasumoffski gave similar advice to the empress, and its wisdom was soon apparent; for the project of the marriage having transpired, the populace, in the utmost indignation, tore down one of the images of the empress, and, after publicly whipping it, dashed it to pieces.

Catherine was not displeased with Bestuchef, nor pleased at the interference of the chancellor Vorontzoff. Indeed, the latter was treated both by her and Orloff with such marked coldness, that, under pretext of failing health, he asked and obtained permission to travel abroad for two years. The empress feigned a regret at his departure, and paid great respect to him when in public, desiring him to hasten his return to resume the functions of an administration which, she said, he filled so successfully for the happiness of the empire.

The empress had much difficulty in silencing the murmurs which her rumoured marriage with Orloff had occasioned. A bold attempt was even made to seize the person of the latter. A guard stood at the door of his bedchamber, and one of the sentinels was induced by a bribe to consent to deliver him, while asleep, into the hands of three of the conspirators. Fortunately for the favourite, a mistake was made in the

hour; and when the latter presented themselves, the sentinel who was their accomplice had been relieved by another. On seeing three strangers about to enter into Orloff's chamber, the man gave the alarm; other soldiers soon arrived on the spot, and the conspirators had only time to escape under cover of the uniform they wore. Catherine was alarmed; and reports of plots were constantly brought to her ears. Count Panin and the hetman Rasumoffski, and even her once intimate friend the Princess Daschkaw, were suspected of being implicated in them. The empress contemplated the arrest of them all; but having no evidence against them on which she could rely, and fearing to incur further odium by an ill-timed severity, she thought it better rather to act the part of the fox than the lion, and to conciliate those whom she could not venture to crush.

The empress knew that the Princess Daschkaw, notwithstanding her high spirit and her great abilities, was both precipitate and imprudent. She therefore trusted to be able to draw from her some information which would clear up her doubts. With this view, she addressed a long letter to her, lavishing upon her many tender epithets, and conjuring her, in the name of friendship, to reveal to her what she knew of the recent conspiracies, assuring her, at the same time, that she would grant a free pardon to all concerned in them. The princess discerned Catherine's motive, and angry that she should endeavour to use her as an instrument of vengeance, replied, in a brief note, as follows:—"Madam, I have heard nothing; but if I had heard anything, I should take good care how I spoke of it. What is it you require of me? That I should expire on a scaffold? I am ready to mount it." Though unsuccessful in her attempt with the princess, Catherine yet disarmed the disaffection of Panin and Rasumoffski, and bestowed upon them further distinctions. Though not able to unravel the web of conspiracy which she knew existed, she prevented its being carried into effect. She threatened those who should be detected in treasonable designs with severe measures, and declared that, for the future, she would not conform to the edict of the empress Elizabeth, by which that potentate had promised never to put a criminal to death. At the same time, Catherine was aware that the best mode of conciliating a people was to promote their



interests; and with this view she founded colleges and hospitals in every part of her empire, encouraged commerce and industry, and took many steps for the enlightenment of her people. Sensible of the great, and yet undeveloped, natural advantages of Russia, she issued an imperial edict containing regulations for the promotion of commerce, in which she thus enumerated them:—"On the whole surface of the earth, there is no country better adapted for commerce than our empire. Russia has spacious harbours in Europe; and, overland, the way is open through Poland to every region. Siberia extends, on one side, over all Asia, and India is not very remote from Orenburg; but on the other side it seems to touch upon America. Across the Euxine is a passage, though as yet unexplored, to Egypt and Africa; and bountiful Providence has blessed the extensive provinces of our empire with such gifts of nature as can rarely be found as they are wanted in all the four quarters of the world." The measures which Catherine took for the promotion of the commercial interests of the empire, consisted chiefly in the abolition of a number of oppressive monopolies, and of the permission to her people to export corn free of duty, except in times of scarcity at home.

We may here mention, that the famous Seven Years' War was brought to a close at this time. Russia being no longer opposed to Frederic, that able soldier soon repaired his losses, reconquered Silesia, and inflicted heavy blows on the Austrian forces. Peace

having been concluded between England and France, they paired off, and France abandoned the cause of the empress-queen, as England had done that of the Prussian monarch. The quarrel thus stood, as it at first began, between Austria on one side, and Prussia on the other. Though the former country had greater means than the latter, she could not hope to succeed in a war unaided, which, even when supported by powerful allies, she had been unable to bring to a successful conclusion. Austria, too, was threatened by a formidable enemy in another quarter; the standing enmity of the Ottoman Porte was roused into activity, and 100,000 Turks were gathered on the frontiers of Hungary. The bitterly-revengeful spirit of Maria Theresa was compelled to yield; and in the February of 1763, the peace of Hubertsburg terminated a war which, for seven years, had devastated Germany. After immense sacrifices of human life and treasure, the political balance of Europe remained unchanged. "The whole continent in arms," observed an eloquent writer, "had been unable to tear Silesia from that iron grasp. Frederic was safe. His glory was beyond the reach of envy. If he had not made conquests as vast as those of Alexander, of Cæsar, and of Napoleon—if he had not, on fields of battle, enjoyed the constant success of Marlborough and Wellington, he had yet given an example, unrivalled in history, of what capacity and resolution can effect against the greatest superiority of power and the utmost spite of fortune."\*

## CHAPTER XXXII.

CATHERINE PLACES HER FORMER LOVER, PONIATOWSKI, ON THE THRONE OF POLAND; CONSPIRACY OF MIROVITCH, AND MURDER OF PRINCE IVAN; SPECULATIONS CONCERNING THAT EVENT; EFFORTS OF THE EMPRESS FOR THE SECURITY OF HER THRONE AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF HER PEOPLE.

It was not long before Catherine had an opportunity of exhibiting her power and decision to the great states of Europe. Augustus III., king of Poland, died on the 5th of October, 1763; and the empress of Russia, who desired that the future monarch of that country should be subservient to

her wishes, resolved to raise her former lover, Count Poniatowski, to the vacant throne. This was not agreeable to the great majority of the Poles, who desired to elect a Piast, one of the descendants of their ancient kings. The Polish nobles,

\* Macaulay.



also, naturally indignant at the prospect of being governed by a young man whose birth was not illustrious, and who had not those great natural gifts which enable their possessors to command, as it were, by a patent derived direct from nature herself, viewed the proposed elevation of Count Poniatowski with great aversion. What services, inquired they, had he rendered the country, to entitle him to so glorious a reward?

Poniatowski is described as endowed rather with those qualities which are adapted to conciliate the friendship of individuals, than to fit him for wearing a crown. Tall, well-made, of a figure at once commanding and agreeable, he spoke and wrote with fluency the principal languages of Europe; but he possessed only a slight knowledge of those affairs with which it is necessary for a statesman to be familiar. Rather weak than gentle, rather prodigal than generous, he might easily dazzle a thoughtless multitude, but not persuade men of calm judgment. He possessed more personal grace than mental strength, and was better adapted to mingle with the polished crowds of a court than to occupy the solitary dignity of a throne. But Catherine spared no effort or political intrigue to effect his election. Some one at St. Petersburg had the boldness to tell her that Poniatowski was not of a rank sufficiently dignified to entitle him to the Polish throne, as his grandfather had been steward of a little estate belonging to the Princess Lubomirski. "Though he had been so himself," retorted the empress, "I will have him to be king, and king he shall be." She kept her word; Poland was pressed upon by Russian armies; and on the 7th of June, 1764, an action took place between the latter and a body of Polish troops under Prince Radzivil, in which, after a fierce contest, the Poles were defeated. Finally, Poniatowski was elected, and, on the 7th of September, pro-

claimed king of Poland and grand-duke of Lithuania, under the name of Stanislaus Augustus. The nobles who had opposed his election now thronged to do him homage, and he began his reign with as much tranquillity as if he had not been raised to the throne by unjust and violent means. Europe submitted to Russian dictation in Poland, and the new sovereign received letters of congratulation from most of the great continental courts.\*

Prior to the conclusion of this election, the empress Catherine, attended by her favourite, Count Orloff, and a small retinue of nobles, had started on a tour through the provinces of Esthonia, Livonia, and Courland; and, during her absence, a tragic incident, which is yet involved in some mystery, occurred at the fortress of Schlussemburg, to which prison the unfortunate Prince Ivan had been again conveyed. This victim of his illustrious birth was the object of considerable sympathy on the part of the people, and of concern on that of the sovereigns who had successively occupied the throne which, while an infant, he had for so brief a time occupied. The empress Elizabeth once caused him to be brought in a covered cart to St. Petersburg, where she saw and conversed with him. On that occasion, it is said that the graces of his figure, the plaintive accents of his voice, and the touching complaints he uttered, awakened the sensibility of all present, and even drew from the empress abundance of tears. She, however, directed him to be taken back to his prison, and did not soften the dreary misery of his confinement. Peter III., as we have already described, visited Ivan, and probably contemplated restoring him to liberty, and naming him as his successor. Catherine also had an interview with him soon after the commencement of her reign, in order, according to her own statement, to judge of his understanding and talents, and to procure him an agreeable and quiet

\* Frederic of Prussia sent a communication of this kind to the Polish sovereign, which, from the soundness of its political views, should be remembered by princes and admired by their subjects. "Your majesty must reflect," said the great soldier-king, "that, as you enjoy a crown by election and not by descent, the world will be more observant of your majesty's actions than of any other potentate in Europe; and it is but reasonable that it should be so. The latter being the mere effect of consanguinity, no more is looked for (though much more is to be wished) from him than what men are endowed with in common. But from a man exalted by the voice of his equals, from a subject to a king, from a man volun-

tarily elected to reign over those by whom he was chosen, everything is expected that can possibly deserve and adorn a crown. Gratitude to his people is the first great duty of such a monarch; for to them alone (under Providence) he is indebted that he is one. A king who is so by birth, if he acts in a manner derogatory to his station, is a satire only on himself; but an elected one, who behaves inconsistently with his dignity, reflects dishonour also on his subjects. Your majesty, I am sure, will pardon this warmth. It is the effusion of the sincerest regard. The amiable part of the picture is not so much a lesson of what you ought to be, as a prophecy of what your majesty will be."



situation, suitable to his character and the education he had received. To her great surprise, she said, she found him suffering from an impediment of utterance which rendered his discourse almost unintelligible, and a total privation of sense and reason. He was unable to read, knew no one, and could not distinguish between right and wrong. The empress, therefore, felt compelled to leave him where she found him, with an order that he should be supplied with all the comforts and conveniences that his melancholy situation would admit of.

This statement has been suspected of untruth, and as being merely made in accordance with a policy attributed to Catherine of calumniating the unfortunate object who had a claim to the throne on which she sat. Certain it is, that the Russian court circulated many doubtful stories about the unhappy prince. At one time it was given out that he was stupid, and incapable of uttering articulate sounds; at another, that he was a drunkard, and as ferocious as a savage; then it was rumoured that he was subject to fits of madness, and supposed himself to be inspired. But these reports were not generally believed, and the discontented regarded them as the result of a malignant policy. Almost all the numerous conspiracies which, in the early reign of Catherine, constantly threatened her overthrow, had for their object the restoration of this unfortunate captive to the throne. It was for his sake that men who had never seen him, and whose very existence was utterly unknown to him, were continually braving the scaffold. That Ivan was ignorant is certain, from the way in which he was brought up in a fortress, confined without any means of obtaining even the most simple education; but it does not appear that he was either mad or simple; and, indeed, the conversation he held with Peter III. would exonerate him from the latter aspersions.

Catherine certainly had an interest in the death of the imprisoned Ivan; and she is suspected, though perhaps wrongfully, of promoting the incident we are about to relate, which led to it under very painful circumstances. The regiment of Smolensk was stationed in the town of Schlussemburg, and a company of about one hundred men guarded the fortress in which Ivan was confined. In this regiment was a young officer, named Vassili Mirovitch, whose grandfather had been implicated in the rebellion of the

Cossack chief Mazeppa, and had fought under Charles XII. against Peter the Great, at Pultowa. The estates of the family of Mirovitch had, therefore, been forfeited to the crown, and the young soldier had frequently urged his pretensions to have them restored. In answer to his application, hopes were held out to him that the estates might probably be restored, *if he would show himself active in securing the tranquillity of the empire.* The answer leads to the suspicion, that the services required from him were the adoption of some means for the assassination of Prince Ivan in such a manner as would not implicate the empress and her government. In what other way could a subaltern officer promote the security of the Russian empire?

We have nothing but surmises to guide us in this matter; but Mirovitch was soon engaged in a mad attempt to set the prince at liberty. Whether the ease with which the late revolution had been accomplished, induced him to suppose that the work of dethroning a sovereign was one of but little difficulty, and to lead him to seek for fortune in the convulsion of an empire; or whether, on the other hand, his attempt to deliver the prince was a mockery, in collusion with the emissaries of the empress, for the purpose of bringing about the death of the unhappy Ivan, is more than can be conclusively established.

Two officers, Captain Vlassieff and Lieutenant Tschekin, slept with the imprisoned Ivan in his cell. These men were in possession of a discretionary order, signed by the empress, by which they were enjoined to put the imperial captive to instant death on any insurrection that might be made in his favour, supposing that it could not be suppressed in any other way.

The door of Ivan's prison opened into a sort of low arcade, which, together with it, formed the thickness of the castle wall within the ramparts, and in this arcade eight soldiers usually kept guard; the others were in the guard-house, or at their respective stations. This little force within the fortress was commanded by an officer of the regiment, who was changed every week. Whatever may have been the exciting cause, it is certain that Mirovitch contemplated a conspiracy for the release of the prince, or, at least, for enabling him to obtain possession of the person of the royal captive. Under the influence of irresolution, he had allowed his period of duty to pass without



making the attempt he contemplated. Under these circumstances, he solicited and obtained permission to remain on guard for one week longer. Feeling that he must make instant use of the time allotted him, he admitted one Jacob Pishkoff into his confidence, and then began to tamper with three corporals and two common soldiers. These men also were won to his purpose, and, between one and two in the morning, they assembled again, and induced about forty of the soldiers on guard to join them in their desperate purpose.

Mirovitch then led them at once towards the prison of Prince Ivan. Beredinkoff, the governor of the fortress, roused from his sleep by their noise, suddenly made his appearance, and authoritatively demanded of Mirovitch the reason of his appearing in arms at the head of the soldiers? Mirovitch, without answering a word, knocked him down with the butt-end of his firelock, and giving directions to some of the men to secure him, continued his march. Arrived at the corridor into which the door of Prince Ivan's chamber opened, he attacked the eight soldiers who guarded that avenue. These men drove him back, on which he ordered his followers to fire upon them. The guard returned the fire, and though, strange to relate, no one was killed or wounded on either side, yet the conspirators retired in dismay. Mirovitch endeavoured to bring them again to the attack, but they hesitated, and insisted on seeing the order which he said he had received from St. Petersburg, authorising his conduct. The schemer was provided for this emergency, and he immediately took from his pocket and read to them a forged decree of the senate, recalling Prince Ivan to the throne, and excluding Catherine from it, because, it averred, she was gone into Livonia to marry Count Poniatowski. The simple soldiers were deceived, and, falling into order, prepared to resume their attempt to gain possession of the prince. To render opposition useless, and to cause the inmates of the cell to open the door, Mirovitch caused a piece of artillery, which had been brought from the ramparts, to be planted against it. Having threatened to batter down the door, it was thrown open, and Mirovitch and his followers entered without opposition. The sight that met their gaze was the bleeding and lifeless body of the prince, on whose pallid face the convulsive struggles of a violent death yet lingered. By the corpse

stood the two officers who had slept in the cell of the unfortunate young man, and who, from his companions, had become his butchers.

These men had, in the first instance, called out to the sentinels to fire; but when they heard the cannon placed against the door, and preparations made for its discharge, they held it impossible to resist the force opposed to them, which was greatly magnified by their fears. Conscious that the peace of the empire would be endangered by the liberation of their prisoner, and fearful of the punishment they might incur in the event of their charge being wrested from them, they held a hurried consultation, and came to the conclusion that their duty required from them the performance of the conditional command they had sworn to execute—that of putting the wretched captive to death. The prince had been awakened by the report of the fire-arms; and hearing the shouts of the assailants without, and the threats of the officers within his cell, he implored the latter to spare his miserable life. Regardless of these entreaties, they proceeded to execute their horrible design; but Ivan, though unarmed and in his night-dress, fought with his murderers with the strength of despair. In a short time his right hand was pierced through, and he had received several wounds. Still he grasped the sword of one of the assassins, and broke it; but, at that moment, the other stabbed him from behind, and threw him down. There the ruffian whose sword he had broken, plunged a bayonet several times into his body, and the wretched prince soon expired.

It was at this moment that they opened the door, and showed Mirovitch the new-made corpse, and the order by which they were authorised to perpetrate the frightful deed they had just committed, in the event of any attempt being made to liberate their captive. Mirovitch appeared struck with horror, and throwing himself upon the body, exclaimed, "I have missed my aim; I have now nothing to do but to die." He made no attempt to escape, or to avenge the fate of the prince by ordering his followers to shoot the murderers; but, on rising, he went passively to the spot where he had left the governor in the hands of the soldiers, and surrendering him his sword, coolly observed, "It is now I that am your prisoner."

The following day the corpse of the ill-



fated Ivan was exposed before a timber church within the castle, and the people admitted to see it. Enormous crowds came for that purpose from the neighbouring towns, and even from St. Petersburg. On beholding the mangled body, their expressions of grief and indignation were unbounded. Ivan was full six feet in height, and was finely formed. His features were regular, and his complexion extremely fair; he had very light hair, and a red beard. The partial absence of colour from his face and hair, was no doubt the result of his having lived the greater part of his life where he never beheld the natural light of day, or felt the cheering rays of the sun. At the time when his gloomy life was terminated by the hands of assassins, he had not completed his twenty-fourth year. The body of the ill-starred captive, who in his babyhood had sat upon the imperial throne of the most powerful empire in Europe, was wrapped up in a sheepskin, and buried without ceremony. Vlassieff and Tschekin, the murderers, were compelled, in consequence of the murmurs of the people, to hurry on board a vessel then about to start for Denmark, where, on their arrival, they were taken into the protection of the Russian minister. Shortly afterwards they returned, and were rewarded by promotion for their sanguinary fidelity to the empress.

The governor of Schlussemburg sent an account of the catastrophe to St. Petersburg, together with a manifesto discovered on the person of Mirovitch, which contained many scurrilous invectives against Catherine, and represented Prince Ivan as the sole legitimate emperor; and was to have been published at the moment when the prince, having been set at liberty, was making a public entry into St. Petersburg. A courier was immediately dispatched by Count Panin to the empress, who was then at Riga; suffering, it was observed, under a visible impatience, and frequently inquiring for news. So great was her irritability and disquietude, that she occasionally rose in the night to ask whether any courier had arrived. These circumstances were remembered to her disadvantage by those who suspected that the conspiracy of Mirovitch was originally instigated by her or her ministers; but it must be remembered that her agitation was by no means unnatural, when we consider that

she had for some time been suffering from apprehensions of the conspiracies which, she had reason to believe, were ever fermenting around her.

Catherine published a long manifesto, in which she gave an account of the affair, and commended the conduct of the assassins "who had nipped this rebellion in the bud." The trial of Mirovitch and his confederates she referred to the senate, in conjunction with the synod and the presidents of the colleges. It was conducted with great formality; but the conspirator himself preserved a calm and easy air. He even replied in a frivolous and sometimes insolent manner to the questions which were put to him, as if, it has been urged, he knew the trial to be a mockery, and felt secure of a pardon whatever might be the verdict. If such was the case—if he had really acted in collusion with the government, he was now cruelly deceived. Sentence of death was passed upon him as a disturber of the public peace. He received it unmoved, and even walked with indifference to the scaffold. Probably his demeanour was the result of a contempt of life, since all his attempts to advance himself had been failures; but if he had been the instrument of a barbarous policy, he was now its victim. So far from any pardon being extended to him, the time fixed for his execution was accelerated. Indeed, if the empress was guilty of a complicity with Mirovitch, how could she have shielded him from punishment without drawing upon herself the charge of having prompted his crime? Besides this, she would have preserved a dangerous witness, who might have proved extremely troublesome.

Public opinion was much divided on this matter; and on the return of the empress to St. Petersburg, many persons endeavoured, by watching her countenance, to discover if they could read in it any confirmation of their suspicions. In this they were disappointed. Catherine, always mistress of herself, wore a face of smiles, and had a demeanour as serene, and a step as firm, as those whose minds knew no care, and whose hearts were unoppressed by guilt. There is, indeed, just room to hope that the empress was not implicated in the crime of Mirovitch; but, on the other hand, there are heavy reasons for suspicions against her.\* Though Mirovitch was the only person put to death in consequence of this

\* The Princess Daschkaw, always the apologist of Catherine, thus endeavours to clear the character of

her imperial mistress. We append her observations from a sense of justice to the empress, whose great



conspiracy, no less than fifty-eight were punished, and some of them with great severity. Pishkoff, as the most guilty, was sentenced to run the gauntlet twelve times through a line of a thousand men. The three corporals and the two soldiers, who were the next seduced by Mirovitch, were each flogged ten times, and then condemned to labour at the public works. The rest were whipped through the ranks, and sent into distant garrisons. This severity was calculated to obviate the suspicions that were entertained concerning the existence of any eminent participators in their crime.

Whether or not Catherine or her ministers were implicated in the events which terminated in the murder of Prince Ivan, the stability of her throne was established by that dismal event. Under her rule the empire was gradually becoming more European in its nature, more polished in its population, and more developed with respect to its resources. It was observed by one of her biographers, that she had not only the supreme authority which in Russia was the source of the law, but also the judgment which knew when to show that authority, and how to employ it. Few monarchs understood so well the art of being bountiful at the most fitting time, and of making presents with such significance as to fix the gratitude of the receiver, and elicit the sense of affectionate loyalty which is commonly acquired by beneficent princes. "While Catherine," observes her biographer Tooke, "was giving law to Poland, amusing Austria, conciliating the friendship of Prussia, and treating with England, she was also tampering with the other courts of Europe, and labouring efficaciously towards very soon making herself dreaded by them. She exerted herself to the utmost in giving new spirit to the commerce of her country, in augmenting her navy, and, above all, in softening the manners of her people, as yet not far advanced in civilisation. But, badly

seconded by the great personages of the empire, and even by such as were about her, the progress of her institutions was at first but slow. The spirit of division continued to reign in St. Petersburg. The outrages that were to be prevented or punished, always made it necessary for Catherine to keep well with the conspirators to whom she was indebted for the throne. But the favours she was incessantly heaping on that greedy and insolent crew, were so many additional sources of hatred and discontent. Some new plot or conspiracy was forming every day; and every day the good fortune of the empress, or rather her prudence, delivered her from danger. Punishments were secret and terrible. The authors of one plot could but rarely undertake a second."

Dissensions existed between Catherine's chief minister, Count Panin, and her favourite, Prince Gregory Orloff. The latter, considering himself permanently established in the favour of the empress, was regardless of those assiduities by which he had won it, and even neglectful of his attendance at court, from which he would absent himself for several weeks at a time, engaged in the pleasures of the chase. The astute Panin, therefore, with the view of depriving Orloff of the favour of his imperial mistress, placed near her a young officer, named Vissenski, whom he had observed her regard with apparent interest. Vissenski was admitted by the empress into her favour, and Panin trusted that Orloff would soon be discarded. But the latter, hearing what was going forward, suddenly appeared at court, and became so assiduous in his attentions to the empress, that the latter felt her cooling affections for him revive; and the new favourite was loaded with brilliant presents, and dismissed to an employment that settled him in a province remote from the capital.

Catherine employed many means for the detection of the conspiracies which continually disturbed her repose, and for ascer-

talents as a sovereign must ever act in modifying our censure of her offences. "It has been said, and affected to be believed in several countries of Europe, that this whole affair was neither more nor less than a horrible intrigue on the part of the empress, who had gained over Mirovitch to act the part he did, and had afterwards sacrificed him. During my travels, in 1770, I frequently introduced in conversation the subject of this conspiracy, in order to exculpate Catherine from the twofold wickedness of such a charge. I everywhere found, that nations, viewing with a jealous eye the growing preponderance

of Russia, made it a common interest to establish into truth, as a sort of political equivoque, every calumny against its active and enlightened sovereign. I remember, when speaking of this subject at Paris, expressing my astonishment, as I had before done, to M. and Madame Necker, at Spa, that a nation like the French, which had had a Cardinal Mazarin for its minister, should puzzle itself by accounting for such an action in such a manner, when their own annals must have so readily suggested the efficacious expedient of a well-mixed cup, for arranging these matters with greater secrecy and expedition."



taining the names of those who were disaffected to her government. For this purpose she intercepted the correspondence of the foreign ministers; and unsuccessful insurrection thus increased the vigilance of despotism, and called into being a dangerous system of espionage. She succeeded in purchasing the letters of the French *chargé d'affaires*, and also in obtaining a copy of his key to those written in a secret cipher. In this correspondence she fancied she detected a knowledge of, if not a participation in, the traitorous schemes which existed around her. This increased her aversion to the court of Versailles, and caused her to treat the French minister with so marked a coldness, that he deemed it expedient to return to his native country. Louis XV. replaced him by the Marquis de Beausset, who arrived in St. Petersburg, and was presented to the empress on the 1st of May, 1765.

This gentleman was unable to conciliate the favour of Catherine, whom he presumed to be actuated by a jealousy of the glory of the French nation. Some such feeling probably existed; but the coldness of the empress appears to have arisen from a sense that the French government, and all persons appointed by it, were inimical to her

interests, and ready to encourage any insurrection which might shake or overturn her throne. As to the French nation, she held it in esteem, and greatly admired the distinguished authors who graced its literature. She corresponded with Voltaire and D'Alembert, and solicited the latter to accept the situation of governor to her son the Grand-duke Paul. She offered the philosopher a salary of 24,000 livres a-year, and every convenience for finishing the *Encyclopédie* at St. Petersburg. D'Alembert declined, and Catherine wrote him a kindly letter, in which she endeavoured to win him to a reconsideration of his decision. Learning that the affairs of Diderot were not prosperous, and that he wished to sell his library to provide for his daughter, she generously purchased it, left it in his own possession, and bestowed on him a handsome income as her guardian of it. To the famous surgeon, Morand, she sent a collection of gold and silver medals which had been struck in Russia, as a token of her satisfaction with the anatomical subjects and surgical instruments he had procured for her. Indeed, almost all the distinguished men of letters, and artists of Paris, received some proofs of her princely, and it must be added politic, munificence.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

INTERFERENCE OF THE EMPRESS WITH THE AFFAIRS OF POLAND; SHE ASSUMES THE PROTECTION OF THE DISSIDENTS, AND THE CATHOLIC POLES SEEK AID FROM TURKEY; CATHERINE EXCLUDES THE ENGLISH MINISTER FROM HER COURT, IN CONSEQUENCE OF AN AFFAIR OF GALLANTRY; TOURNAMENTS AND FESTIVITIES AT ST. PETERSBURG; CATHERINE'S LEGAL REFORMS AND ATTEMPT TO REGENERATE THE LEGISLATURE OF THE EMPIRE; ASSEMBLY OF DEPUTIES FOR THE PURPOSE AT MOSCOW; HER FAMOUS INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE FORMATION OF A NEW CODE OF LAWS; THE DEPUTIES VOTE HER THE TITLES OF GREAT, WISE, PRUDENT, AND MOTHER OF THE COUNTRY; SHE NARROWLY ESCAPES ASSASSINATION; HER ASSIDUITY IN THE PROMOTION OF THE SCIENCES; SHE INTRODUCES THE PRACTICE OF INOCULATION INTO RUSSIA.

CATHERINE did not place her former lover, Count Poniatowski, on the throne of Poland in consequence of any affection she entertained towards him. She was actuated by a motive which, at the time, she did not think it prudent to reveal. The empress of Russia, rather than the king of Poland, was the actual ruler of that country. But this was not all; and Catherine now put forward pretensions of a kind she knew could only

be enforced by the power of the sword. She altered on the map the boundary line between Russia and Poland, and insisted that the limits of the two countries should be so fixed according to her dictation. She also demanded that Poland should contract with her a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, and that all who did not profess the Roman form of Christianity should enjoy the same rights with those who did. The



Poles had adopted the Christian religion, according to the church of Rome, between the ninth and tenth centuries; and as men were then governed much more by forms than principles, and accepted the new mode of worship without much inquiry, a uniformity of opinion, or rather of faith, prevailed. But, in the course of time, many neighbouring states, either by conquest, by right of succession, or by marriage, became united to the kingdom of Poland. These new provinces, in which the prevailing religion was chiefly that of the Greek church, were upon an exact equality with the old in every respect, and each was protected in the observance of its own mode of worship. So late as the commencement of the fifteenth century, it was thought a happiness peculiar to Poland, that, while other countries have at different times been distracted by intestine feuds and rancour arising from diversity of religion, yet that the great variety of opinions on that subject never produced any strife or animosity among this nation. Under these favourable circumstances, it might be anticipated that, after the Reformation, protestantism would make rapid advances in Poland. In the year 1563, Sigismund Augustus passed a law, by which all sects, whether protestant, Greek, or Arian, were permitted the full enjoyment of exercising their worship, together with the right of voting in the diets, and of holding the same offices as the catholics. No one was offended by this noble act of justice and wisdom; indeed, so amicable a spirit existed, that all men were glad to see that the difference of religion produced none in the political and civil rights of the several members of the community. As a mark of distinction, the followers of the different modes of religion were called Dissidents, a term which, though afterwards unhappily converted into a signal for proscription, did not then convey any injurious imputation.

In the course of time the Roman catholics of Poland acquired the ascendancy, and, breaking through the law to which we have alluded, robbed the Dissidents of the rights to which they were entitled by it. The Romanists first persecuted the Arians, and divested them of all their privileges—a process which the Greek and protestant Christian beheld with great complacency. Their want of charity and co-operation was a fatal error. As might have been foreseen, they were next attacked; and, in 1733, the Romanists succeeded in entirely excluding them from the

diets, and even deprived them of the natural privilege of building any new churches. Thus pressed, many of the Dissidents returned to the church of Rome; but those who retained their principles, cherished them the more dearly on this very account. They referred to the treaty of Oliva, of which so many monarchs were the guarantees, as securing them the rights of which they had been despoiled. In consequence of this the diet, then composed only of catholics, passed a decree, attaching the guilt of high treason to such Dissidents as should have recourse to foreign powers for obtaining the execution of the infringed treaty, and the re-establishment of the law so despotically repealed.

This produced a reaction, and the Dissidents were furious. Those of the Greek church at once sought the protection of the court of St. Petersburg, while the protestants entreated the interference of England, Denmark, and Prussia. The sovereigns of the latter countries promised their support—a circumstance which Catherine and her ministers regarded as a sufficient pretext for the military interference of Russia. Such was the state of affairs at the close of the year 1765.

When the Polish diet assembled in the autumn of 1766, the ministers of the protecting courts presented their memorials on behalf of the Dissidents. This proceeding produced much dissatisfaction, and the catholic bishops were extremely violent. Saltyk, the bishop of Cracow, not satisfied with the iniquitous law passed against the Dissidents, proposed that new ones of a more severe character should be adopted. His example was followed by others among the Romanist priesthood and nobles: violent clamours took place; and, despite the protest of a few enlightened members, the recent intolerant enactments against the Dissidents were confirmed.

In the meantime a Russian army, under the command of Prince Repnin, had entered Poland, and advanced to the very gates of Warsaw. The Russian general then demanded, in the name of the empress, not only a toleration secured by law in behalf of the Dissidents, but a complete political equality with the catholic party. This the latter furiously rejected; and the Dissidents formed themselves, under the Russian protection, into a confederation, for the purpose of securing by force what they could not obtain by reason. Romanist tyranny thus led to a servile war, which soon raged



in all its horrors, and additional bodies of Russian troops were constantly entering the Polish territories. King Stanislaus Augustus assembled a diet-extraordinary, with the hope of pacifying the contending parties. His object was frustrated by the violence of the Bishop of Cracow and his adherents, who made speeches utterly in defiance of reason and of prudence. Prince Repnin, who had now quite invested the city of Warsaw, caused the bishops of Cracow and of Kief, and several of the most violent catholic nobles, to be seized and hurried off to Siberia. He offered the confederated Dissidents an excuse for this outrage, by assuring them that he had only violated the liberty of the Poles for the benefit of Poland; and when the king, at the instigation of the diet, desired the release of the prisoners, Repnin treated the application with disdain; nor were these offensively intolerant persons permitted to return from their exile in the deserts of Siberia, until the lapse of a period of six years.

The diet was overawed, and adopted a more moderate tone. It even appointed a committee for settling the rights of the Dissidents, in concert with the ministers of the courts which had undertaken the advocacy of their cause. Prince Repnin, in consequence of the powerful army he had at hand, ruled almost absolutely at Warsaw, and the Dissidents obtained whatever the Russian ambassador demanded in their behalf. The ancient law, enforcing not only toleration, but equal political rights, for those who professed other than the Roman form of Christianity, was restored; and other enactments, still more favourable to the Dissidents, were passed. This was but justice; but it was a notorious calamity, that such a result was brought about by the armed interference of Russia. Roman intolerance gave a plausible pretext for that foreign dictation which eventually led to the extinction of Poland as a nation. Moreover, a number of regulations were enforced by the orders of the empress Catherine, which tended to promote the troubles and anarchy of that distracted country, and to leave it without defence against the usurpations she contemplated.

The catholic nobles, though intimidated for a time, soon raised a loud outcry against the Dissidents; formed themselves into confederations for the defence of the Roman religion; and even solicited, and obtained, the protection of the Turks! As to the

king whom Catherine had placed upon the Polish throne, he was altogether powerless, and resided at Warsaw more like a prisoner than a prince. The courts of Europe regarded the conduct of the Russian empress with amazement; but she addressed herself with consummate art to the task of disarming any opposition they might be disposed to give. She was sure of Frederic of Prussia; for she knew that he desired nothing better than to share with her the provinces of Poland. Sweden she kept quiet by her intrigues; while she humoured Denmark by holding out to it a hope of the cession of Holstein. England she flattered by a favourable treaty of alliance and commerce; while France alone seems to have refused to be blinded as to her secret views. The court of that country, in order to defeat the projects of Russia by dissipating its means, addressed itself to the design of involving the empress in a war with Turkey. The French ambassador at Constantinople represented to the Porte, how unjust and dangerous it was that Russia should dare to violate the rights of the Poles, and invade their territory. He assured the Moslem cabinet that the demarcation of the limits exacted by the court of St. Petersburg, would be attended with consequences fatal to the security of the Euxine; and he advised them resolutely to oppose it. The Turkish minister, therefore, sent a note to the king of Poland, requesting that the regulation of the limits might be suspended till some explanations should be given the sultan of a nature to remove his alarms concerning the danger with which the cession of the Polish territory threatened the Ottoman empire. Stanislaus Augustus, fearful of offending Catherine, and most solicitous of regaining her friendship, answered that there was not the least proposal for altering the limits between Russia and Poland. The Porte having received this assurance, returned for a time to its customary apathy. "Notwithstanding which," observes a modern historical writer, "the great empires of Russia and Turkey—the most powerful in Asia as well as in Europe—were soon to be engaged in a bloody conflict. Religion had entered into the quarrel, and added to its bitterness. The miserable country of Poland was the theatre of a contention not more destructive in its consequences than singular in its causes and pretexts. The despotic power of Russia became the guardian of Polish freedom;



and the catholic religion fled for protection to the standard of Mohammed."

The favourable treaty of alliance and commerce into which the court of Russia entered with that of England, was concluded in the December of 1767. Yet, notwithstanding the partiality which the empress displayed towards this country, she was induced to exclude the British minister for some time from her court. This was in consequence of an affair of gallantry between him and one of the maids of honour, which became so public, that Catherine deemed it requisite to interfere. She therefore dismissed the offending lady, and prohibited the presence of the ambassador. It might be supposed that a consciousness of her own frailties would induce the empress to regard deviations from the path of a stern chastity with feelings of peculiar leniency. Such, however, was not always the case; and she occasionally assumed, even in the presence of those who best knew her, as great an appearance of austerity in manners as of attachment to religion. On one occasion, when two ladies of her court were, at a masquerade, talking loudly concerning one of their admirers, the empress went up to them, and commanded them to leave the ball-room, since they knew no better than to pay so little regard to decorum.

During the winter of 1767, Catherine endeavoured to divert the disaffection which yet existed, by the excitement of public festivities. A spacious amphitheatre was erected at St. Petersburg, and several tournaments took place, in imitation of those common in the civilised countries of Europe during the middle ages. On these occasions the ladies of the court jostled as well as the chevaliers; and all, both ladies and knights, wore upon their gorgeous dresses of silk or velvet, a profusion of gold and silver, pearls, and other precious stones. The entertainments lasted during several days; and then the company, amounting to several hundred persons, sat down to a splendid supper, the dessert at the conclusion of which represented the circus in which the carousal had taken place. At night the imperial summer gardens were illuminated, and the walks lighted with numerous arches of lamps burning with naphtha, radiant temples, and illuminated fountains. The pyrotechnic art lent its aid to the display, and the festival terminated with a masquerade in the gardens.

Catherine had a purpose in this gorgeous trifling, which did not draw her attention from the solid duties of her exalted station. She was incessantly occupied in the erection of useful institutions, and the promotion of those reforms which most softened the manners of her subjects. Ever prepared to crush conspiracy, and active to conciliate disaffection, she yet aimed at dazzling the judgment of mankind, and taking captive their admiration. The crude state of the laws of the Russian empire had for some time been notorious; and previous sovereigns had directed their attention to the subject. Though absurdly voluminous, they were yet found insufficient in practice, extremely perplexing, and containing many contradictions. In addition to this, they were so loaded with precedents, reports, cases, and opinions, that they produced constant altercations, and could scarcely be reconciled or understood by the very professors of them.

The empress resolved, by one great legislative act, to re-create the laws of the country in such a manner that they should be impregnated with the spirit of justice and clemency. The senate and the colleges she formed into separate departments, each of which was to address itself to one sort of business only, by which the latter was executed with more dispatch, and fewer opportunities given for artifice and venality. To obviate the well-known dishonesty of the judges, she augmented the emoluments of their offices, openly observing, in the ukase she published on the occasion—"Indigence may, perhaps, hitherto have given you a propensity to self-interest; but now the country itself rewards your labours: and, therefore, what might heretofore have been pardonable, will henceforward be criminal." Besides increasing the salaries of the judges, the empress made some, though an insufficient, provision for them, when that period of life should arrive at which increasing infirmities dictated their retirement from active duties.

These were merely preliminary matters; and Catherine now aimed at the glory of giving a new, and, as far as circumstances would permit, perfect code of laws to the empire. With this object she commanded all the provinces of Russia, even the most remote and barbarous, to send deputies to Moscow, competent to represent their ideas as to the laws most fitted for their respective conditions. The empress then proceeded to



that ancient city, to welcome this novel convention. The assembled deputies represented many nations and tribes, and differed from each other widely in manners, in dress, and in language. It might be supposed that so heterogeneous an assembly—the greater part of which had never even thought about laws, much less the responsible task of constructing them—would merely listen to their instructions, and obey them. Such, we may not unfairly assume, was the intention of the empress; and her object in convening the assembly was to give at least the appearance of a popular sanction to what, in reality, she designed to be her own act.

When the deputies were assembled in the hall appointed for their deliberations, the business was commenced by the public reading of a work written, or rather compiled, by the empress herself, and entitled, *Instructions to the Commissioners appointed to frame a new Code of Laws for the Russian Empire*.\* These instructions, pregnant with a humane and exalted spirit, were borrowed chiefly from the writings of Montesquieu, and others of the French philosophers. Catherine, therefore, does not deserve the praise which was so profusely lavished upon her as their authoress. Yet, though the merit of originality must be denied to her, she deserves no small commendation for having compiled, and thus given her sanction to, principles tending to destroy despotism and enlighten a people. In them she recognised no legitimate authority but that which was founded upon justice; she aimed at the destruction of arbitrary legislation, and the prevention of those who governed under her from exercising a capricious or cruel authority. The instructions to the deputies were read to them in the Russian language; but the original was written in French, almost entirely in the handwriting of the empress. It has since been deposited, inclosed in a magnificent case, in an apartment of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg.

The assembled deputies frequently interrupted the reading of the instructions by their bursts of applause; and all present extolled the wisdom and humanity of the sovereign. These expressions of admiration, though no doubt proceeding, in some instances, from conviction, were, in others,

merely the result of adulation. Yet the meetings did not pass without some opposition to the imperial will, and a threatening appearance of affairs without. Much conversation took place about the right of the serfs to liberty; and many thousands of this unfortunate class prepared to obtain by force that which they correctly feared would not be granted to them by equity. The nobles dreaded an insurrection, in the event of the system of serfdom being continued; but they dreaded still more a falling-off of their revenues if it should be abolished. So strong were their feelings on the subject, that some of them threatened to poniard the first man who dared to move for the enfranchisement of the serfs. Still, Count Scheremetoff, the wealthiest man in Russia, declared his willingness to accede to this measure; and the debate was carried on with so much warmth that fatal consequences were apprehended, and the deputies dismissed to their respective homes.

Though the benefit intended for the people of Russia was thus unhappily frustrated, it was suggested that it should not be equally lost to the sovereign who had projected it; therefore, before the deputies separated, they decreed to the empress, by general acclamation, the titles of Great, Wise, Prudent, and Mother of the Country. This was, doubtless, very agreeable to the empress; yet, when she was solicited to accept those titles, she replied, with an assumption of modesty, "That if she had rendered herself worthy of the first, it belonged to posterity to confer it upon her; that wisdom and prudence were the gifts of heaven, for which she daily gave thanks, without presuming to derive any merit from them herself; that, lastly, the title of Mother of the Country was the most dear of all in her eyes—the only one that she could accept, and which she regarded as the most benign and glorious recompense for her labours and solicitude in behalf of a people whom she loved."

Yet Catherine was naturally proud of the flattering adulation which had been offered to her; a luxury for which she possessed a great and eager appetite. She commanded copies of her instructions to be sent to those sovereigns whose applause she most desired. She received, in return, many compliments on her literary performance, and assurances that it would be an eternal monument to her glory. The great soldier-statesman of Prussia dazzled the empress by the incense he

\* This work, considered the most remarkable of those which proceeded from the pen of the empress, was translated into English by M. Tatishcheff, and published in London in 1768.



thus offered, and bound her still more closely to a regard to his interests. Writing with his own hand to the Russian minister Panin, he observed—"I have read with admiration the work of the empress. I was not willing to tell her all that I think of it, because she might have suspected me of flattery; but I may say to you, with due deference to modesty, that it is a masculine performance, nervous, and worthy of a great man. We are told by history that Semiramis commanded armies. Queen Elizabeth has been accounted a good politician. The empress-queen has shown great intrepidity on her accession to the throne; but no woman has ever been a legislatrix. That glory was reserved for the empress of Russia, who deserves it."

The construction of the articles was a work of considerable extent, even though we exclude the preparatory labour of study and reflection which, had the document been entirely original, must necessarily have preceded its execution. Yet, as an ingenious compilation, it was not a light task, consisting as it did of no less than 525 articles. Indeed, though it failed to produce the effect intended, yet even the publication and dispersion of such a work throughout the empire, could scarcely have failed to produce valuable civilising and educational results. Though not in itself a law-book, but merely a number of instructions as to the spirit in which laws should be made, it must have exercised, and no doubt still exercises, a considerable influence over Russian legislation. We subjoin a few of the articles, in the tolerably confident hope that they will not be without interest to the intelligent reader.

"The spirit of the nation, the nation itself, ought to be consulted in the framing of laws.

"These laws should be considered no otherwise than as a means of conducting mankind to the greatest happiness.

"It is our duty to mitigate the lot of those who live in a state of dependence.

"The liberty and the security of the citizens ought to be the grand and precious objects of all laws; they should all tend to render life, honour, and property as stable and secure as the constitution of the government itself.

"The liberty of the subjects ought only to be restricted concerning what it should be disadvantageous to them to do.

"In causes purely civil, the laws should

be so clear and precise, that the judgments resulting from them be always in perfect unison in the same cases, in order to remove that jurisprudence of decisions which is so often a source of uncertainties, of errors, or acts of injustice, according as a cause has been well or ill defended at one time or at another, gained or lost, according to influence or circumstances."

With respect to legislation for crime, the empress gave the following humane and enlightened instructions:—

"It is incomparably better to prevent crimes than to punish them.

"The life of the meanest citizen is of consequence, and no one should be deprived of it, except when it is attacked or required by the country.

"In like manner his liberty should be respected, by being cautious about imprisonment, by carefully distinguishing the cases in which the laws will dispense with it, as also those in which the public safety requires arrest, detention, or formal imprisonment; and in this case even concerning different prisons.

"In the methods of trial, the use of torture is contrary to sound reason. Humanity cries out against this practice, and insists on its being abolished.

"A prisoner is not to be sacrificed to the torrent of opinions. Judgment must be nothing but the precise text of the law; and the office of the judge is only to pronounce whether the action is conformable or contrary to it."

Concerning punishments, she said—

"The aim of punishment is not to torment sensible beings.

"All punishment is unjust when it is not necessary to the maintenance of the public safety.

"The atrocity of punishments is reprobated by the compassion that is due to human nature; whenever it is useless, it is a sufficient reason to regard it as unjust, and, as such, to reject it.

"In the ordinary state of society, the death of a citizen is neither necessary nor useful."

Nothing in relation to government was left untouched in these instructions, which were replete with the most noble and liberal sentiments. "Contrive," said the imperial writer, "that the laws favour less the different orders of citizens, than each citizen in particular. Let men fear the laws, and nothing but the laws. Would you prevent



crimes? provide that reason and knowledge be more and more diffused among mankind. To conclude: the most sure, but the most difficult, method of making men better, is by rendering education more complete."

Some writers, sinking from the historian into the mere moralist, have felt, or affected, so much indignation at the vices of Catherine, that they have resolutely denied her the admiration which was her due, and have endeavoured to place her most meritorious deeds in the meanest possible light. The cause of virtue will never be served by conduct like this; which is neither truthful nor honourable. The character of Catherine must be contemplated with sober judgment, and not with intemperate invective. It is a psychological problem, not difficult of solution to the student of the human mind. The private vices of the woman must be separated from the public virtues of the sovereign, and the latter acknowledged, not grudgingly, but in a tone of generous appreciation. Attempt to write or compile history in any other frame of mind, and it is in danger of becoming not only partial in its views, and low in its estimate of humanity, but altogether worthless. The instructions of Catherine, like all else she did, have, by some writers—and those among the most recent on the subject—been condemned in the carping spirit of which we have spoken, which, unhappily, is usually more ready to censure than to deliberate; more prone to the utterance of easy obloquy, than addicted to habits of generous forbearance. With respect to this literary and legislative performance of the empress, we are ourselves inclined to agree with the favourable estimate of her biographer Tooke, who says—"The whole performance is an excellent compendium of choice observations, of just maxims, and of generous sentiments; and, at the same time, a beautiful collection of striking passages from the celebrated philosophers of Greece and Rome; of apt examples from ancient and modern history, from the manners of cultivated and savage nations, and even from such nations as are not very much known to the rest of Europe, the Chinese and other Asiatics. Whoever would make himself acquainted with the philosophy of legislation, might reap considerable advantage by taking it as his manual."

Catherine laboured zealously to establish her fame by the services she rendered to material as well as to legislative science.

Prior to the transit of the planet Venus over the sun, in the summer of 1769, she wrote a letter with her own hand to the director\* of the Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, in which she desired to be informed of the most proper places in her dominions for making observations; and offered to send workmen and artists, and to construct buildings in all such places as the academy might think proper for the purpose, and to grant every assistance requisite to the undertaking. At the same time she desired, that if there were not sufficient astronomers in the academy to make observations in all the favourable localities, that notice might be given her, and she would send a proper number of the officers of her marine to qualify themselves, under the direction of the professors of the academy, for that undertaking. Such is the extent of the Russian empire, that the observations which were made, both on the transit and exit of this planet (the one in the frozen regions towards the Pole, and the other on the borders of the Caspian), were carried on within its own limits; to some part of which, astronomers from every part of Europe went to behold that remarkable occurrence. It is interesting to add, that the instruments used by the members of the academy on this occasion, were specially procured for them from London, by Mr. Short, a member of the Royal Society, who was so successful in his efforts, and in the suggestions he offered, that he received the thanks of that body, and a letter containing a confession of the doubt they entertained of being able to comply with the desires of the empress without his assistance.

In the year 1768, Catherine narrowly escaped perishing by the hand of an assassin. The fate of Peter III. had not been forgotten by the people, who now regarded the memory of that unfortunate monarch with a feeling approaching to affection. Amongst the malcontents who mourned the murder of the late emperor, was a young officer named Tschoglokov, who appears to have been of a highly excitable, if not disordered mind. He entertained a superstitious belief that he was directed by heaven to avenge the fate of Peter, by depriving the empress of life. After brooding for some time on this idea, he resorted

\* Vladimir Orloff, the youngest brother of Gregory and Alexis; the eldest, Ivan, lived a retired life, and received from Catherine the nickname of "the Philosopher."



to the palace for several days in succession, and lurked about in the ill-lighted passages leading to the apartments to which Catherine retired when she wished to be alone. In one of these passages, through which she was shortly about to pass, was the intended assassin arrested, in consequence of his having rashly confided his design to another officer, whose friendship for him he incorrectly supposed to be stronger than his duty to his sovereign. When Tschoglokov was seized, a long poniard was found on him, and he confessed, without hesitation, the use for which it was designed. Catherine concealed the fear with which we may reasonably suppose such a discovery inspired her: she also suppressed her indignation, and generously spared the life of the enthusiast who would have taken her's. Commanding him to be brought into her presence, she mildly expostulated with him on the enormity of the crime he had striven to commit. Instead of being hurried to the scaffold, he was at first sent to prison, and afterwards exiled to the heart of Siberia. Something of policy was doubtless mingled with this mercy; but it was mercy, nevertheless; and such as perhaps no other potentate in Europe, at that time, would have been wise enough to extend to any similar criminal. Catherine desired not publicly to punish a crime which, if it had been much talked of, might soon have had imitators.

In order to carry out those national improvements to which the empress addressed herself with so much energy, she gave orders to the Academy of Sciences to select a number of learned and able men, for the purpose of travelling over the empire and reporting concerning the capacities of the land and the wants of the people. Her commands were executed in a manner that did much honour to the academy. Several very distinguished men were amongst those engaged in this vast labour, and their journals contained a vast amount of valuable information. At this period the court of Catherine obtained the illustrious distinction of being regarded almost as the home of the sciences; for to it she invited distinguished learned men from every part of Europe.

The empress had the acuteness to perceive that it is less by the power of the sword, the roar of artillery, and the fierce parade of war, than by precedence in the sciences and the arts, that nations obtain

an illustrious place in the annals of the world. She therefore encouraged artists of all kinds, and scholars of all views; and while granting new privileges to the Academy of Sciences with a noble liberality, exhorted its members to add the names of several celebrated foreigners to those which already conferred a lustre on their society. She also assigned an annual sum of 5,000 roubles for the purpose of procuring translations of the literature of other nations into the Russian language. Nor did she less cherish the interests of the Academy of Arts. She increased the number of its pupils, whom she directed were not, in future, to be received after the age of six years, that their tempers might not be spoilt, or their manners corrupted by the influence of a bad education. When admitted, the boys were placed for three years under the care of women; after which they were delivered to the more advanced tutors; and they were finally instructed in the art for the acquirement of which they displayed the most aptitude. Some became painters, sculptors, architects, watchmakers, or engravers; while others learnt the art of casting in metals, or of making mathematical and optical instruments. All these lads were clothed, fed, and lodged at the public expense; and, during the whole period of their residence at the academy, their parents were not at any expense for them whatever. They remained for fifteen years at the institution; and, on leaving it, those who carried off the highest prizes, received a sum of money for the purpose of travelling for three years over Europe.

At this period, that once terrible, but now disarmed malady, the small-pox, made great ravages amongst the inhabitants of St. Petersburg. Neither rank nor fortune secured to its possessors any security from the assaults of this frightful disease. The beautiful Countess Scheremetoff was attacked and carried off by it on the very eve of her intended marriage to Count Panin. Considerable alarm prevailed, and the empress and her son, the Grand-duke Paul, avoided the capital, and remained at Tzarskoselo. Under these circumstances a proposal was made for introducing the practice of inoculation into the empire. A remedy was anxiously desired; but a natural antipathy existed against submitting to an operation which, on a first reflection, appeared both repugnant and unnatural. The empress and the Grand-duke Paul (the latter, doubt-



less, influenced by the decision of his distinguished mother) resolved themselves to set an example by first submitting to an operation still regarded as both hazardous and experimental in its nature. Inoculation had been most practised in England, where it was introduced, about forty years before, from Turkey, by the famous Lady Mary Wortley Montague.\* In the summer of 1768, Dr. Thomas Dimsdale, an able physician of London, was invited by Catherine to St. Petersburg. On being introduced to her majesty, she showed great perspicuity in the questions she put to him concerning the practice and success of inoculation, and then invited him to dine with her. The following is the doctor's description of the repast, which, as presenting a picture of imperial life in Russia at the court of this famous sovereign, is not destitute of interest to those who find a pleasure in efforts of the imagination at realising the scenes of past times and the habits of the famous ones of the earth:—"The empress sat singly at the upper end of a long table, at which about twelve of the nobility were guests. The entertainment consisted of a variety of excellent dishes, served up after the French fashion; and was concluded by a dessert of the finest fruits and sweetmeats, such as I little expected to find in that northern climate. Most of these luxuries were, however, the produce of the empress's own dominions. Pine-apples, indeed, are chiefly imported from England; though those of the growth of Russia, of which we had one that day, are of good flavour, but generally small. Water-melons and grapes are brought from Astracan; great plenty of melons from Moscow, and apples and pears from the Ukraine. But what most enlivened the whole entertainment was the unaffected ease and affability of the empress herself. Each of her guests had a share of her attention and politeness; the conversation was kept up with a freedom and cheerfulness to be expected rather from persons of the same rank, than from subjects admitted to the honour of their sovereign's company."

Dr. Dimsdale afterwards desired the empress to grant him the assistance of her court physicians, to whom he wished to

communicate his mode of proceeding, and the medicines he administered to his distinguished patients. To this Catherine would not consent, and stated her reasons at length. "You are come well recommended to me," said she; "the conversation I have had with you on this subject has been very satisfactory, and my confidence in you is increased. I have not the least doubt of your abilities and knowledge in this practice, while it is impossible that my physicians can have much skill in this operation. They want experience; their interposition may tend to embarrass you, without the least probability of giving any useful assistance. My life is my own; and I shall, with the utmost cheerfulness, rely on your care alone. With regard to my constitution, you could receive no information from them. I have had, I thank God, so good a share of health, that their advice has never been required; and you shall, from myself, receive every information that can be necessary. I have also to acquaint you that it is my determination to be inoculated before the grand-duke, and as soon as you judge it convenient. At the same time I desire that this may remain a secret business; and I enjoin you to let it be supposed that, for the present, all thoughts of my own inoculation are laid aside. The preparation of the great experiment on the grand-duke will countenance your visits to the palace; and I desire to see you as often as it may seem necessary, that you may become still better acquainted with what relates to my constitution, and also for adjusting the time and other circumstances of my own inoculation."

The empress was much pleased with the satisfactory manner in which Dr. Dimsdale performed the operation, both upon herself and upon the grand-duke. She rewarded the successful experimentalist with a present of £10,000, together with a pension of £500 a-year, to be paid him in England, and by creating him a baron of the Russian empire. On Dr. Dimsdale's son, who accompanied and assisted his father, she conferred a similar title, and presented with a superb gold snuff-box, richly set with diamonds. Before Dr. Dimsdale left Russia, the empress purchased a house, and, under

\* When we occasionally descant with so much fluency upon the barbarism and prejudices of other nations, it would be as well to reflect upon the ignorant and superstitious opposition with which the beautiful and witty Lady Mary was encountered in her benevolent attempt to introduce the practice of

inoculation into this country. The clergy actually preached from their pulpits on the impiety of thus seeking to take events out of the hands of Providence; and the people were taught to hoot at her, as an unnatural mother who had risked the lives of her own children.



his able directions, converted it into a hospital for the purposes of inoculation, which, under these favourable circumstances, was soon resorted to by the most sensible of the Russian people. In a grand thanksgiving service for the recovery of the em-

press, which was performed in the chapel of the palace, the metropolitan observed, in the course of his sermon, "that the Russians had borrowed assistance from Britain; that island famed for wisdom, bravery, and virtue."

#### CHAPTER XXXIV.

AFFAIRS OF POLAND; WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY; VISIT OF PRINCE HENRY OF PRUSSIA TO CATHERINE; AN IMPERIAL FETE; REVERSES OF THE TURKS; WALLACHIA, MOLDAVIA, AND BESSARABIA ACKNOWLEDGE CATHERINE AS THEIR SOVEREIGN; NAVAL VICTORY OF THE RUSSIANS IN THE BAY OF TSCHESME; SCHEME FOR THE SUBJECTION OF GREECE AND EGYPT TO RUSSIA; FATE OF THE YOUNG PRINCESS TARRAKANOFF.

POLAND, though retaining a delusive semblance of independence, was in fact but little more than a province of Russia. Its king had been elected, and its laws were framed, by Russian influence, while its states were governed through the instrumentality of a Russian army. The intolerant and tyrannical conduct of the Polish priesthood and catholic nobles had given Catherine an excuse for interference; but the Poles saw that their national independence was perishing, and the Ottoman Porte became reasonably jealous of the almost absolute influence over Poland which its great northern neighbour had acquired. Catherine did not seek for war with Turkey; and when that power, in consequence of the appeal made to it by the Poles, and in accordance with a policy usually regarded as a wise one, first assumed a menacing attitude, she suspended the settlement of the limits between Russia and Poland, without, however, abandoning her idea of eventually seizing on a portion of the latter country.

Poland was distracted by a furious servile war between the united catholic nobles and priesthood and the Dissidents. Almost every conceivable horror reigned in that miserable country; and the fields, instead of being devoted to the culture of the necessities of life, were often covered with the unburied bodies of those who used to till them. The catholic confederates again implored assistance from the Turks—a requisition which was supported by the influence of France. The sultan resolved on war; and causing the Russian ambassador to be

arrested, had him (in October, 1767) placed in confinement within the walls of the famous prison-fortress, called the Castle of the Seven Towers. At the same time a temperately-written manifesto, by the sultan, explanatory of the cause of the hostile demeanour to Russia, was delivered to the foreign ministers residing at Constantinople. In it the empress was charged as a breaker of treaties; with having "set up for a king a private Polish officer, in whose family there had never been any king, and to whom loyalty was not becoming;" and with invading a frontier of the territories of the Porte, and there massacring upwards of a thousand Mussulmans.

Though Catherine had not desired war with an enemy so powerful as the sultan, yet she had prepared for, and no longer sought to avoid, a contest which, sooner or later, was inevitable. Catherine issued a declaration to the courts of Europe, in which she declared that the intentions of Russia had been calumniated; and complained, in a tone of dignity, of the insult offered to her ambassador. "The honour and glory of her imperial majesty," said this document, "the regard to her empire, point out the part it is right for her to take. Confiding in the justice of her cause, she appeals to all Christian courts on the situation she finds herself in with regard to the common enemy of Christianity." Immense preparations were made in Turkey for the war, and the Porte gave out that they intended to open the campaign with an army of 500,000 men.

The empress was not behindhand; and



she gathered a formidable army, or rather series of armies. Indeed, on the breaking out of the war, the general voice of Europe seemed to presage victory to Russia, and many persons expressed an opinion that that power would be in possession of Constantinople before the end of the first campaign. Early in 1769 her troops began their march, and soon extended from the banks of the Danube to those of the Kuban. Azoff and Taganrog were also put in a state of defence; and Catherine caused her fleet in the Euxine to be augmented. The Tartars of the Crimea, so long dreaded by the Russians, were the first who now felt the weight of their arms. The Russian forces next laid siege to the fortress of Choczim, regarded as the key of the Turkish empire. The Moslems knew the advantage of this stronghold, and they concentrated their whole power in its defence. Many furious engagements followed, attended by immense loss to both sides, and not productive of any great advantage to either.

Catherine and Frederic of Prussia surmised each other's intentions with respect to the partition of Poland; but each of them felt the necessity of conferring together on that great design. Yet, as an interview between them might excite suspicions in the minds of the other monarchs of Europe, Frederic determined on sending his brother, Prince Henry, into Russia, to represent his views to the empress. This prince was one of the most celebrated generals of the age; and so great were his military talents, that even his illustrious brother, never prone to pay compliments, said of him, that, in commanding an army, he was never known to commit a fault. Professor Richardson, then at St. Petersburg with the family of Lord Cathcart (the English ambassador), gave the following vivacious description of the Prussian prince:—"To judge of him by his appearance, I should form no high estimate of his abilities. But the Scythian ambassadors judged in the same manner of Alexander the Great. He is under the middle size; very thin; he walks firmly enough, or rather struts, as if he wanted to walk firmly; and has little dignity in his air or gesture. He is dark-complexioned, and wears his hair, which is remarkably thick, clubbed and dressed with a high *toupée*. His forehead is high, his eyes large, with a little squint; and, when he smiles, his upper lip is drawn up a little in the middle. His look expresses sagacity

and observation, but nothing very amiable; and his manner is grave and stiff, rather than affable. He was dressed, when I first saw him, in a light-blue frock, with silver frogs; and wore a red waistcoat and blue breeches. He is not very popular among the Russians; and their wits are disposed to amuse themselves with his appearance, and particularly with his *toupée*. They say he resembles Sampson; that all his strength lies in his hair; and that, conscious of this, and recollecting the fate of the son of Manoaah, he suffers not the high approaches of any deceitful Dalilah."

Some artifices were resorted to to make the visit of Prince Henry to the Russian court appear a matter rather of accident than of design. On his arrival at St. Petersburg, he was, however, received with the honours which are usually paid only to monarchs. On the day of his being presented to the empress, he dined in public with her; and all that passed was conducted with the most rigorous attention to ceremony: but, on subsequent occasions, the empress and the prince met and discoursed together without the least restraint. Catherine entertained her guest with truly imperial magnificence and hospitality. Not a day passed without some new festivity; and one entertainment, at Tzarsko-selo (the palace of the czars, and the fixed summer residence of Catherine), has been deemed worthy of a lengthened description by many writers. The palace stands at the extremity of a thick forest, and is built in the form of an amphitheatre. The exterior impresses the observer with a sense of grandeur from its magnitude; while he is dazzled with the profusion of its gilded ornaments. The gardens—laid out in the English fashion—are of great extent and beauty, and contain a collection of antique and modern statues, picturesque ruins, baths, lakes, pyramids, and a spacious hall for musical entertainments.

It was in this magnificent palace that Catherine gave to the Prussian prince one of those extravagantly gorgeous entertainments with which she, at times, delighted and astonished her court. On the approach of evening, the empress, the Grand-duke Paul, and Prince Henry, entered an immense sledge drawn by sixteen horses, and set out from St. Petersburg, followed by upwards of 2,000 sledges, filled with courtiers in masquerade costumes. Along the road were triumphal arches, lit up in the



most brilliant manner; illuminated temples, pyramids of lamps, displays of fireworks, vaulting and tumbling, and rustic dances by shepherds and shepherdesses. On approaching the palace, an artificial mountain was seen through an avenue in the wood, pouring out from its summit torrents of flames, in imitation of Vesuvius during an eruption. On arriving at the palace, the company danced for two hours in a suite of apartments lit by an enormous number of wax-candles. Then came a roar of cannon; the ball was suspended; the lights were all extinguished; and the company ran to the windows, from which they enjoyed a magnificent exhibition of fireworks. When these were terminated, another discharge of artillery took place, the wax-candles were suddenly relit as if by magic, and a splendid supper was already served up, and only waiting the attack of the guests. After this refreshment, dancing was resumed, and continued until a late hour in the morning. Indeed, all the entertainments of the empress were conducted with a magnificence not exceeded by any court in Europe.

Among the numerous presents which Catherine bestowed upon the prince, was the star of the order of St. Andrew, full of very large brilliants, and containing a single diamond valued at 40,000 roubles. All these pleasures did not arrest the accomplishment of the secret object of the journey of the brother of the Prussian monarch. The dismemberment of Poland was resolved upon; and it was determined that Austria should be bribed into acquiescence by making her a sharer in the spoliation. Prince Henry was so satisfied of the consent of Joseph II., the son and successor of Maria Theresa, that he even settled with Catherine the conditions to be observed in the dismemberment of Poland, and fixed the extent of territory that each of the powers engaged in this iniquitous scheme should appropriate to itself. The treaty, however, was not signed until two years afterwards.

The war between Russia and Turkey raged with fury on the frontiers of the latter country. The results were variable; and the Russians were twice repulsed from the fortress of Choczim; and even driven, for a time, into Poland. But though the Turks fought with great courage, the ignorance of their generals drew upon them many reverses; and, after ten months of

war, their once numerous army was almost destroyed, and Choczim eventually surrendered to a very small force. The offended sultan not only caused his unsuccessful general to be deprived of the command, but also to be put to death.

Catherine, satisfied with the attitude of her fleet on the Black Sea, boldly resolved to strike a blow at her enemies even in the Greek islands. With this object, she commanded a number of new vessels to be constructed; and the dockyards of Cronstadt, Revel, and Archangel swarmed with workmen from all parts of the country. She laboured strenuously to keep up a good understanding with England and Denmark, then the two most important maritime powers; and she doubled the number of English naval officers engaged in her service. Amongst the experienced British naval officers who at this period entered the service of Catherine, may be mentioned the names of Elphinstone, Greig, Tate, Dugdale, and Admiral Knowles. The empress also requested the maritime powers to give a friendly reception and assistance to her ships of war. England complied with this desire; but other states regarded it unfavourably; and France, Spain, Venice, and Naples, would only consent to admit the merchant vessels of Russia into their ports.

By the September of 1769, a Russian fleet, consisting of twenty sail-of-the-line, together with six frigates, and several transport vessels containing troops, steered their course into the Mediterranean, whose waters had never before been breasted by the war vessels of the great northern power. It was placed under the command of Alexis Orloff, assisted by Admiral Spiridoff. Europe gazed with astonishment on the spectacle thus presented. A nation which, prior to that century, was scarcely known but on the map, had sent a fleet to agitate the remotest parts of the Mediterranean; to excite and support the insurrections of the Greek Christians against their Mohammedan masters; and to create confusion and alarm in this distant part of the vast empire of its Ottoman enemies. Indeed, this expedition is regarded as a not unimportant era in naval history. Catherine was aware that the fate of Poland, and the consideration in which Russia should in future be held in Europe, depended on the result of the war against the Turks, and she therefore exerted herself to the utmost to ensure



its success. For some time before the sailing of the Russian expedition, the emissaries of the empress had been at work among the inhabitants of the isles of Greece, with the object of exciting a general revolt against the authority of the Porte; but the Greeks were soon found to be fickle and unprincipled, deficient both in discipline and courage, and far more devoted to plundering than to fighting.

Prince Galitzin was superseded in the command of the Russian army by Count Romantsoff. General Panin and Prince Dolgoruki had each another army under their directions. The Russians opened the campaign of 1770 by laying siege to Bender, in Bessarabia—a place which had acquired some distinction as having been the refuge of Charles XII. of Sweden. Their efforts were unsuccessful, chiefly in consequence of the harassing attacks to which they were exposed from the Tartars. But the Russians were far more than compensated for this disappointment by being victorious in two pitched battles with the Turks. The first was fought on the banks of the Pruth, where a Turkish army, amounting to 80,000 men, was stationed. As General Romantsoff was unable, for some time, to bring them to an engagement, he made such movements as induced the enemy to imagine that he was about to retreat. The Turks were deceived, and detached 20,000 men to pursue him. These were repulsed with great loss, and fled back in terror to their camp. The Russians followed them; the engagement was renewed; and the Turks finally abandoned their intrenchments and a great part of their baggage and artillery.

The Turks retired towards the Danube, where they were joined by large detachments from the grand Ottoman army. The Russian general, uninformed of this, and supposing that he was in pursuit of an army in confusion, followed them rapidly with a force of only 18,000 men, and suddenly found himself confronted by an army of 150,000 Turks. The grand-vizier saw his advantage, and surrounded the Russian army in such a manner as to cut off all possibility of retreat. The following morning the Russians were attacked on all sides at once; and notwithstanding the immense disparity of numbers, the firing was kept up for five hours without any decided advantage to either of the adversaries. The Russian general then seems to have remembered, that as the enemy could afford

to lose eight men to his one, a contest thus conducted must terminate in his defeat, and the probable destruction of his troops. There was but one chance of escape—to charge with the bayonet, and, by a desperate effort, burst through the ranks of the foe. This plan was adopted, and the Turks gave way before the furious charge of their assailants, and retreated within their intrenchments. Encouraged by this success, the Russians renewed their efforts with redoubled energy. The Turkish host was thrown into confusion, and took to flight, leaving an immense number of dead and wounded upon the field of battle, and abandoning 143 pieces of brass cannon, and 7,000 waggons loaded with provisions.

Other successes followed. Bender, which had been a second time besieged, surrendered, after a resistance of nearly three months, to General Panin. On the fall of this fortress, the Tartars of Budziak and Otchakof submitted to the Russian rule. Indeed, so great were the triumphs of the imperial arms, that the provinces of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bessarabia, acknowledged the Russians as their masters, and sent deputies to do homage to Catherine.

By sea the Russians obtained a success of which they were far more proud than of their triumphs by land. The squadron of Admiral Spiridoff, in the Archipelago, was joined by another under Elphinstone, an English naval officer, who held the rank of vice-admiral in the Russian service. The Turkish fleet opposed to the united Russian squadron was under the directions of a capudan-pasha, whose skill and valour had obtained for him the surname of Gazi, or "the Victorious." He had won some advantage over the Russians, and compelled them to retire from Lemnos; but he was soon to experience the superior power of his foe. On the 5th of July, 1770, the rival fleets met in the channel that separates the Isle of Scio from Natolia. The Turkish fleet, besides being superior in point of number to that of the Russians, was stationed behind some small islands and rocks, which formed for it a sort of natural intrenchment. Yet the Russians had the spirit to accept the offered battle, and the engagement commenced. The *Sultan*, a ship of 90 guns, bearing the flag of the capudan-pasha, challenged that of Admiral Spiridoff, and the two vessels were soon side by side in furious combat. Desperate efforts were made on each side, and showers of



balls and grenades crossed the deck of each vessel. At length the Turkish ship caught fire; and as the Russian one could not be disengaged from it, they both blew up together, and covered the sea with their smoking fragments. The admirals and a few officers were rescued; but the crews perished.

A pause in the engagement ensued while the ships were burning; and the other vessels, struck with terror for a time, abandoned the fight. It was soon renewed; but the approach of night separated the combatants. The Turks then committed an error which led to their destruction. They had the imprudence to enter the narrow and slimy bay of Tschesmè, where some of their vessels ran aground, and the confined space deprived the rest of the power of action. The following morning Vice-admiral Elphinstone stationed himself at the entrance of the bay, to prevent the egress of the Turks. He then directed that four fire-ships should be prepared, placed under the protection of the English Lieutenant Dugdale, and protected by the vessels of another Englishman—Vice-admiral Greig. The day passed away; and as midnight approached, Greig attacked the Turks with four ships of the line and two frigates. Under cover of this diversion, Dugdale approached the Turkish fleet with his fire-ships. Braving the vigorous fire of the enemy, and encouraging the hesitating Russians by his example, he himself fastened the grapplings of a fire-ship to one of the Turkish vessels, and then, with his hands, face, and hair all burnt, threw himself into the sea, and swam to the Russian squadron. So effectual was the fire, and so crowded were the Turkish vessels, that within five hours the whole fleet was destroyed. Only one man-of-war and a few galleys escaped the devouring flames; and this was in consequence of their being towed off by the Russians. The Turkish sailors made no efforts to stop the conflagration, and sought only to secure their own safety. Some got away in boats, and others leaped into the sea and endeavoured to save themselves by swimming; but the Russians, with an unnecessary ferocity, sent out boats to knock these poor struggling wretches on the head, or dispatched them by grapeshot from the ships. An English officer who was in command of a Russian boat, struck with horror at this massacre, endeavoured to put a stop to it; but he was told by the

Russians that it was Count Orloff's order that no quarter should be given. The Turks who reached the shore dispersed themselves about the country, and committed such excesses, that it was found necessary to send out a body of troops to put an end to their ravages. If it had not been for the explosion of Admiral Spiridoff's ship, which involved the destruction of six or seven hundred persons, the Russians would have purchased this victory very cheaply, as, with that exception, they had not fifty men killed and wounded. Indeed, the greater part of the ships had never come into action, and Orloff himself had kept at a distance, which preserved him from all chance of danger. The loss of the Turks was very severe, and estimated by their victorious enemies at 10,000 men; but this was a gross exaggeration. Still the slaughter was terrible; for this Russian victory was little else than a conflagration and a massacre; and for many weeks the bay and its shores were covered with dead bodies, putrefying beneath the burning heat of a summer's sun. When the work of blood was over, and while the Russians were yet reeking with the steam of slaughter, Orloff ordered a general thanksgiving to the Deity for the success of the Russian arms; and the applauding Greek priests, who had put off in boats from the villages of Scio, Samos, and Anatolia, sprinkled the ships with holy water, and gave their blessings to the crews. On the other hand, the infuriated Turks massacred every Greek they could find—man, woman, or child—between Tschesmè and Smyrna.

After the destruction of the Turkish fleet, the Russians entered the harbour and bombarded the town, and a castle which protected it, with so much success, that both were reduced to a heap of rubbish. The conflagration of the Turkish vessels was the result of the exertions of the Englishmen—Elphinstone, Greig, Dugdale, and Mackenzie; but the empress gave the credit of the idea of it to Alexis Orloff. The Russian fleet then anchored at Paros, from which point they commanded all the Greek seas, and where they did not permit a single vessel to approach without lowering its topsails.

Orloff dispatched a courier with the news to the empress Catherine, who was the first person in St. Petersburg made acquainted with the victory of Tschesmè. Information of the event was received with extreme joy,



and magnificent festivities given to celebrate it. When, in the spring of the following year, Alexis Orloff returned to St. Petersburg to enjoy his triumphs, the rejoicings were renewed; and he was decorated by the empress with the grand riband of St. George. He then laid before the council a scheme for the subjection of Greece to the Russian sceptre, and the rescue of Egypt from the dominion of the Porte. To accomplish this, he said he would force the passage of the Dardanelles; and that to effect all these designs, he desired only ten millions of roubles. "I grant you twenty," was the reply of the ambitious Catherine, "for I am resolved that you shall want for nothing." At the same time she issued a command for the equipment of a new squadron, to reinforce that which was already in the Archipelago; and the Russians, intoxicated by an accidental success, vainly dreamed of becoming a great naval power. Catherine, in the height of her success, even contemplated the expulsion of the Turks from Europe.

The Ottoman empire was not only humiliated by the serious reverses it had experienced, but distracted by internal misfortunes. Egypt was in a state of rebellion, under the able Ali Bey. Constantinople was ravaged by the plague; where, for several weeks, about a thousand people died daily from this terrible visitation. The runaway sailors from the destroyed fleet also, united with all the vagabonds and ruffians who chose to join them, filled the city with dread, in consequence of their plundering and violence, and made several attempts to set it and the suburbs on fire. So powerful did these dissolute ruffians become, that they ventured on an open engagement with the Janissaries, who cut many thousand of them to pieces, and dispersed the rest. Notwithstanding these calamities, the Porte adopted every precaution for the security of the Dardanelles. The Turkish government collected the ships still in its possession, and fitted them out to assist in defending that famous passage; new batteries were erected on the straits, and the castles put into a proper state of defence.

In 1771, Count Alexis Orloff left St. Petersburg, crowned with honours and loaded with rewards, in order to return to the Archipelago. On his way he passed some time at Vienna, where he gave himself up to a luxuriousness so extravagant as

to excite general surprise. One evening, while at supper with the Russian ambassador and a numerous company, he spoke of the revolution which had placed the empress Catherine on the throne. From motives of delicacy no one questioned him concerning the death of the unfortunate Peter; but he created a sensation of horror throughout the company by calmly relating the particulars of it himself. Perceiving the shudders of disgust that he excited, the dull and strong-nerved ruffian endeavoured to excuse himself by saying, "That it was a lamentable thing for a man of so much humanity as he possessed, to be forced to do what he had been commanded."

On leaving Vienna, Orloff proceeded to Leghorn, where, in obedience to the commands of the empress, he engaged a celebrated German artist, named Philip Hackert, to represent the engagement of the Russian and Turkish fleets, and the destruction of the latter at Tschesmè. The artist was unable satisfactorily to represent the blowing-up of the Turkish vessels; and on Orloff complaining of this, he replied that he had never seen a ship destroyed by explosion. To obviate this, Orloff furnished him with the most expensive model that was ever made for an artist. In the month of May, 1772, he caused a Russian frigate to be blown up in the roads of Leghorn, in the presence of the painter and of thousands of persons who had assembled to witness this novel sight. The artist caught the character of the evanescent spectacle, and the picture was then completed entirely to Orloff's satisfaction.

The empress Elizabeth had left three children, regarded as illegitimate, the result of her clandestine marriage with Alexis Rasumoffski. The youngest of these was a girl, who had been brought up under the name of the Princess Tarrakanoff. This young lady was, when about twelve years old, carried away to Rome by the persons to whom her education had been entrusted; an act performed at the instigation of the Polish prince and patriot, Radzivil, who, irritated at Catherine's trampling on the rights of his countrymen, entertained the idea, that the daughter of Elizabeth might furnish him with a signal means of revenge. He conceived, that it would not be in vain to oppose to the sovereign whose armies were spreading desolation over his unhappy country, a rival whom her mother's name would render acceptable to the Rus-



sians. It is probable that he also flattered himself, that he, perhaps, might one day be enabled to mount the throne on which he desired to place the young princess.

Catherine was a dangerous foe, especially when the secret agency of craft was to be resorted to. On the ground of Prince Radzivil being chief of the confederacy of the malcontents, she caused all his estates in Poland to be seized, and reduced him to the necessity of living on the produce of the diamonds and other valuables he had brought with him to Italy. When these were exhausted, he left the Princess Tarrakanoff at Rome in extremely narrow circumstances, and returned to Poland to learn what he could with respect to his own affairs. Here an offer was made to restore to him his estates, on condition that he would take his ward to Russia. To this baseness he would not consent; but he committed the lesser wrong of purchasing his confiscated property by engaging to take no further heed of the unfortunate daughter of Elizabeth.

But the empress was resolved on securing the person of the Princess Tarrakanoff; and Alexis Orloff undertook to become the means of luring that young lady into her power. Having engaged an unprincipled Neapolitan, named Ribas, he sent him to Rome, where this subtle agent soon discovered the lodgings of the young princess, and introduced himself to her as a Russian officer. Affecting a profound grief at the state of destitution in which he found her, he said that he had waited upon her with the sole desire of paying homage to a princess whose fate and fortunes were highly interesting to all her countrymen. Finally, he offered that pecuniary assistance of which the unfortunate lady stood in so much need; while she and her female attendant regarded him almost as a messenger sent from heaven for their relief. Ribas soon gained the confidence of the deserted women; and he then informed the princess, that he was commissioned by Count Alexis Orloff to offer to her the throne that had been occupied by her mother. He added, that the Russian people were averse to the rule of Catherine; that Orloff himself hated her, on account of her ingratitude and her tyranny; and that, if the young princess would accept of the services of that general, and recompense him for them by the grant of her hand, it would not be long before she saw the breaking-out of the revolution he had prepared. The snare was successful,

for the inexperienced girl had no suspicions of the worthlessness of the human viper who was luring her to her fate. Her high birth was no secret to her: Prince Radzivil had dazzled her with hopes of a brilliant destiny; and she seemed now upon the eve of realising the gorgeous day-dreams which had made her recent poverty and neglected condition the more bitter.

When Alexis Orloff himself arrived at Rome, he was received by the princess as her benefactor. Some friendly persons warned her and her *gouvernante* against a man who was notorious for the reckless wickedness of his character. It was in vain. The deluded girl would not mistrust her supposed benefactor, and even communicated to him the cautions she had received; but he justified himself with so much ease, that her confidence was rather confirmed than shaken. Having removed her transient distrust, he entreated her to consent to their speedy marriage. The trusting victim yielded to his wish; the ceremony was performed by some of his attendants, disguised as priests and lawyers; and the princess fancied herself secure in the arms of a husband who had contracted a mock marriage only that he might betray.

Orloff conducted his bride to Pisa, under the pretence that they would be exposed to too much observation at Rome, and that it would be better to wait in some other Italian city for the breaking-out of the expected revolution in Russia. At Pisa, Orloff lodged the princess in a magnificent palace, and treated her with every apparent respect and tenderness; but he did not suffer her to be approached by any persons except those who were entirely devoted to his interests. At the theatre, or on the public promenades, he always accompanied her himself. One day, Orloff told the princess that a division of the Russian fleet had just entered the port of Leghorn, and that his presence was consequently necessary in that city. He, however, offered to take her with him, to which she readily consented, more especially as she had heard much commendation of the beauty of the port of Leghorn, and the magnificence of the Russian ships.

On her arrival at Leghorn she was received with the greatest consideration, lodged in the house of the English consul, and soon surrounded by a little court, in consequence of the great number of persons who came to pay their respects to her.



Every one seemed anxious to study and to anticipate her wishes. In the streets, the people crowded to see her; at the theatre, all eyes were directed to her box. Everything tended to lull her into a fatal security, and to dispel any thought of fear or suspicion. So strong was the confidence she placed in her betrayer, that after a few days spent in amusements, she herself requested to be shown over the Russian fleet. Preparations were immediately made for receiving her with becoming state, and she was handed into a boat with magnificent awnings. Vice-admiral Greig, who was in command of the Russian squadron, and Alexis Orloff, entered a second boat; while a third followed, filled with Russian and English officers. They pushed off from the shore in the sight of an admiring multitude, and were received by the fleet with shouts, music, and salutes of artillery. A splendid chair was let down from the vessel, on which the princess was to go on board, and in this manner she was hoisted upon deck. It was also told her, that these honours were bestowed in recognition of her distinguished rank. No sooner had the unfortunate girl stepped on board than this dissimulation ceased. In a moment she was rudely seized and handcuffed. She then saw that she had been deceived; but she knew not the deep villany of her betrayer. She yet called him husband, implored his interference, threw herself at his feet, and watered them with her tears. It was in vain. He was silent, and his despairing victim was torn away and carried down into the hold. The next day the vessel sailed for Russia. On arriving at St. Peters-

burg, the princess was shut up in the fortress there; and her subsequent fate remains a mystery. Some affirm that she was drowned six years afterwards, by the waters of the Neva entering her prison during the inundation of 1777; others say, that she was secretly put to death by the hands of the executioner; but neither statement has been confirmed by any unexceptionable evidence.

The inhabitants of Leghorn were horrified at the treachery which had been practised towards the unhappy victim of Russian policy. The Grand-duke of Tuscany, whose territory had been so shamefully insulted, complained both to the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, of the outrage that had been committed, but he was unable to obtain any satisfaction; and the Russian traitor braved both his indignation and that of the public. A circumstance which occurred during the stay of Alexis Orloff at Rome, tends to illustrate the coarse manners of this brutal man. One evening, when at supper at the house of the Marchioness Gentili Bocca Paduli, he desired to exhibit some instances of his extraordinary strength. He first, with great ease, broke in his hand several pieces of crystal and iron; then, taking an apple between two of his fingers, he crushed it into bits by tightly compressing them. One of the pieces flew with force into the face of a royal duke who was at table. Every one present, except Orloff, used some expression of regret; he alone, as if disdainful of the courtesies ever current amongst gentlemen, viewed the accident unmoved, and did not even make the slightest apology.

---

#### CHAPTER XXXV.

MOSCOW DEVASTATED BY THE PLAGUE; SUPERSTITION OF THE PEOPLE, AND CONSEQUENT RIOTS; ACTIVITY OF GREGORY ORLOFF IN PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF THE PESTILENCE; UNSUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE BETWEEN TURKEY AND RUSSIA; ORLOFF IS DISMISSED, AND VASSILTSCHIKOFF BECOMES THE FAVOURITE OF THE EMPRESS; THE FIRST DISMEMBERMENT OF POLAND.

DURING the whole of 1771, the city of Moscow was subjected to the ravages of the plague. The Russian army was first infected, in consequence of the soldiers residing in the Turkish towns which they had

captured; the Turks being, either from want of cleanliness, or from some other cause, more subject to that dreadful malady than any other people in Europe. The Russian general at Jassy, where the pestilence raged



in the winter of 1770, endeavoured to arrest its fatal influence by diverting the minds of his soldiers from the contemplation of it. He therefore issued a peremptory order that its name should not be pronounced, and even obliged the military surgeons to draw up a declaration in writing, that it was only a spotted fever. This artifice did not avail; several thousand soldiers died, and great numbers of the citizens perished. Even the general fell a victim to the pestilence as the summer advanced. The infection was also spread to a far greater extent by the insane folly of the soldiers themselves, who persisted in robbing the houses, and even the persons of the infected dead.

From the army the dreadful distemper spread into Russia, and went on with a steady and deadly advance until it reached Moscow. Here the authorities either deceived themselves, or in the hope of allaying the fears entertained upon the subject, issued an ukase, assuring the people that there was no pestilence, and that a false alarm had been wickedly raised among the citizens. In Kief, where also the terrible scourge had made its appearance, similar language was held respecting it; and as none of the physicians or surgeons there had ever seen cases of the plague, they pronounced it to be a putrid spotted fever.

The principal families of Moscow hurried away from the city and went into the country. Their flight was useless; they carried the contagion with them, and spread it through the neighbouring towns and villages, where it destroyed at least 30,000 persons. But its ravages were far more terrible in Moscow itself; for before it subsided, it was estimated that only a fourth part of the ordinary number of inhabitants were left alive. Such was the want of labour, and the apathy produced by fear, that the dead often lay for three or four days in the streets, on the spot where they had dropt and died. The empress, on hearing the news, did not shut her eyes to the real nature of the calamity. She issued a proclamation, containing certain directions to be observed, and sent Gregory Orloff to Moscow with unlimited power to adopt whatever expedient he considered necessary for checking, and, if possible, terminating

the evil. The conduct of the favourite upon this occasion was bold, active, and efficient; and it gained him great distinction. Orloff appointed a commission of health, comprising the most skilful physicians amongst its members. He converted monasteries and palaces into lazarets; appropriated a building for the reception of children whose parents had perished of the plague; turned several of the public offices into houses of quarantine for suspected persons; and adopted other salutary measures. By these means, the further spread of the pestilence was, to a considerable extent, arrested; but no efficient mode of cure was discovered. Most of those who were attacked died, and the plague only subsided as winter approached. It carried off in Moscow alone, at the beginning of September, 800 persons every day; while in the middle of October, five, six, or seven hundred were the daily number of victims. By the 15th of November, the number had decreased to 150; while, on the 30th, but seventy-five perished. On the 4th of December only ten died; and then the number diminished until the 6th of January, 1772, when the plague ceased.

The folly or wickedness of men commonly steps in to aggravate those afflictions which arise from the sickness of nature or the decree of an offended Deity. In this case, it was not sufficient that the invisible power of death floated on every breeze, and rose with the dews of night into the still air, broken only by the moans of agony, the low wailings of despair, or the fierce imprecations of the maniac and the blasphemer. To these terrors must be added the double curse of ignorance and its twin-brother, fanaticism. The dull and brutal populace could not be induced to observe the precautions recommended to them by the government; and so far were they from following the prescriptions of the physicians, that they charged the latter with being the cause of the pestilence, and subjected them to insult and violence. Foreign medical men, especially, could not pass through the streets without peril to their lives. The ignorant people maintained, that the only true mode of cure was continual prayer to the pictures of the saints;\* and this super-

\* "It is difficult to imagine," says Tooke, "to what length the Russians carry their fanaticism for the pictures of the saints, which they call *bohgs* or gods. The figure of some saint is painted in gaudy colours on a piece of board, and the silver, gold, or

diamonds about the hands and face of it, constitute its value. When a Russian enters a room, the first thing he does is to salute the god, which is placed against the wall in one corner, by bowing and crossing himself. St. Nicholas, St. John the Baptist, St.



stitious delusion was not long before it led to a criminal tragedy.

During the month of September, shortly before the arrival of Gregory Orloff, an impostor, or a madman, stood by one of the gates of the city, and declared to every one who passed by, that a picture of the mother of God, placed near the gate, had appeared to him, complained that its worship had been neglected, and promised to quell the pestilence by a miracle, if that worship was zealously revived. Both priests and people listened; and without questioning the honesty or sanity of the fellow, they spread his story by relating it to every one they met. With the mass of the people, to hear was to believe; for the terrors of the plague had created so much dismay, that they were in the frame of mind best adapted for the reception of the narratives of the wonderful and the miraculous. Multitudes flocked to St. Barbara's gate, and bringing with them trinkets to hang about the picture, they addressed it in passionate entreaties or vehement cries. Processions then commenced, and the pestilence was aggravated in consequence of the concourse of people always congregated in the neighbourhood of the picture. Ambrosius, the primate of Moscow, desired to put an end to this confusion. Having procured the assistance of five soldiers, he sent them, late in the evening, to take down and bring away the picture that had been the object of so much excitement. But neither by night nor day was the gate free from a fanatical tumult before the painted mother of God. The soldiers were driven off, and the incensed mob denounced the primate as a heretic. Running to the churches, they rang all the bells, on which nearly all the inhabitants of the city rushed into the streets, supposing it to be an alarm of fire. On the fanatics informing them of the intended removal of the holy picture, the majority joined in the riot, and, swearing vengeance against the primate, went in pursuit of him. He had taken

refuge in the Donskoi monastery without the city; but he was tracked by the rabble, who rushed into the church, and found him engaged in the celebration of divine worship. Unawed by the sanctity of the place, the venerable appearance of the man, or the nature of his employment, they beat the unfortunate prelate to the ground, and then dispatched him with their knives.

Leaving the mangled body lying before the gate of the sacred building, the murderers ran back into the city, where they plundered the residence of the primate, turned the sick out of the lazarets, ill-treated the surgeons, and, breaking into some wine-cellars, soon added the madness of drunkenness to that of fanaticism. Some public officers who endeavoured to calm the tumult were severely beaten; and the tide of popular fury turned against the medical men, who were accused of having occasioned the pestilence. Meeting with an Italian dancing-master, whom they took to be a doctor, they broke both his arms and his legs, and left him lying in that shocking condition in the street. Having attacked and plundered the house of a well-known physician, they pressed forward, staggering, shouting, and filling the air with wild cries, to the principal hospital. At their approach, a hundred soldiers, who had been placed there to protect it, took to their heels; the doctors and attendants had all previously consulted their safety by retreating into the country.

For a few hours Moscow was not only smitten with the plague which struck invisibly, and removed its victims from amongst the living with a rapidity that engendered a mysterious awe, but it also lay at the mercy of a fanatical, desperate, and drunken mob. Few situations could be more calamitous, when the destructive powers of nature, and the blind wrath of brutal men, combined to spread death and terror throughout its dwellings. But the sanguinary carnival that furious ignorance

Sergius, and St. Alexander Nevski, are the figures in most request, except the *bohgoroditza*, the Mother of God. Every one has his particular patron to whom he applies in cases of need. When his neighbours see that he succeeds in the culture of his fields or in trade, they borrow or hire his god, to which they attribute his prosperity. They then pay the borrowed figure all sorts of reverence and offerings. There are in some towns god-markets; and the sole difference between the chaffering is, that in this the word 'money' must never be pronounced. Some people will never go to their daily labour, or set out on a journey, without taking their god with

them; and if a stranger call at their house in the meantime, and asks to salute the *bohgy*, the wife replies that he is gone into the fields, or on a journey. St. George is a protector of horned cattle. The horses are looked after by St. Anthony, and the fish by St. Jonas; one cures one disease and one another. But perhaps it is unjust to deride any religion for its superstitions; all national religious establishments have them under one form or another. The Russian peasants, notwithstanding, are extremely tolerant. 'Your God,' say they to those who are not of the same religion with them—'your God commands you to serve him thus; our God orders us differently.'



carried on within the city of the plague, was suppressed in the evening by General Yerakin, who arrived with 150 soldiers and two field-pieces. Encouraged by the smallness of this force, the rioters encountered it, and a furious fight, which was prolonged until midnight, ensued. By that time 250 of the insurgents lay dead in the street, 300 were taken prisoners, and many more crawled away, desperately wounded, and died in their miserable homes. The decision of General Yerakin restored peace to Moscow; and the governor and officers who had fled from their duty, speedily returned to it.

Soon after this wild outbreak, Gregory Orloff arrived in Moscow with absolute authority to adopt any means he considered expedient for the reduction of the pestilence. His fearlessness and activity contributed much to that result. Some of the means he put in practice were admirable ones. When, in the spring of 1772, a return of the calamity was apprehended, he proclaimed throughout the city, that whoever kept in concealment any goods or other things in houses that had been infected, even though they were stolen, might freely produce them, and instead of punishment, should receive from ten to twenty roubles; and that such articles as had been in the possession of infected persons, and must therefore be burnt, should be paid for according to their full value. The result of this proclamation was, that all the infected garments and other articles which a revolting avarice had filched from the dead, even at the risk of themselves speedily following in the same dark path, were collected and destroyed. Happily the plague, which, according to a Russian estimate, had cost the empire the lives of 133,299 persons, did not return. Such had been the exertions of Gregory Orloff in promoting this end, that the empress Catherine caused a triumphal arch to be erected to his honour, bearing the inscription, "Moscow delivered from the contagion by Orloff." Medals also were struck as memorials of the service he had rendered his country.

During this period Poland continued a prey to confusion; and on the 3rd of September, 1771, its powerless monarch narrowly escaped assassination, in consequence of the belief which prevailed amongst his subjects, that he was acting in concert with the empress Catherine, who, from day to day, was adding to the weight of the yoke

she had forced upon their unhappy country. The danger from which Stanislaus Augustus had escaped, gave Catherine a new pretext for pursuing the confederates of Bar, as the intolerant catholic party were called, and for preparing for the dismemberment of Poland.

Turkey had suffered much in the war with Russia, and desired peace; Russia, who had not sought the conflict, felt it to be a heavy and dangerous responsibility, and was, therefore, not averse to peace. The more so, as the Russian squadron in the Archipelago was devastated by an epidemic which threatened to carry off every sailor in the fleet. Consequently, when the ministers of Austria and Prussia intervened to bring about a peace, an armistice was agreed upon, and a congress appointed to meet at Fokshiani. Gregory Orloff saw in this what he deemed a favourable opportunity for promoting his ambition. Could he obtain a favourable peace for Russia, he conceived that the gratitude of the empress might induce her to make him her partner on the throne, and that popular opposition to such a step would be abandoned in the general joy at the restoration of tranquillity.

The empress had been greatly attached to Orloff; but the feeling he entertained towards her was, it has been conjectured, not affection, but the result of gratitude and ambition. Proud of the favour of his sovereign, he showed himself zealous to deserve it; but when once he thought he had acquired sufficient grounds for his pretensions, his ardour began to cool, and he even assumed a distant behaviour. The more Catherine wished to bring him back to his usual attentions, the more he seemed inclined to retreat, and to seek his amusement in the company of other ladies. The empress could not but resent this ungrateful conduct, and feel hurt at the insensibility from which it proceeded. However, on account of the fondness for her child, of which Orloff was the father,\* she did not at once discard him. The offspring of the adventurer and his imperial paramour was brought up in one of the suburbs of the city, where Catherine, deeply disguised, and under a false name, frequently visited him. It is said, that from affection to this child, and with the object of remedying the inconstancy of Orloff, the empress made him an offer of a clandestine marriage, but

\* A boy, afterwards known as the Count Bobrinski.



that he rejected it with disdain, as he presumed himself not unworthy of sharing with her a throne gained, to no small extent, by his boldness, and upheld by his influence. Catherine, though surprised, masked her displeasure; but considering that the ambition of Orloff was not only humiliating to her, but might give rise to dangerous consequences, she resolved to subdue her attachment to her aspiring and ungrateful lover.

Catherine's chief minister, Count Panin, was acute enough to discern the intentions of his mistress. He had long regarded Orloff with secret aversion; and now that the favourite had departed on his mission to the East, again endeavoured to supplant him in the estimation of the empress. Panin watched her majesty closely, and soon perceived that she often looked with complacency on a sub-lieutenant of the guards, named Vassiltschikoff. This person was young, handsome, and of a good figure; but he had not more than the average intellect or talent, was deficient in a knowledge of the world, and in that courage, or rather confidence, which is commonly indispensable in forwarding addresses where a disparity of rank or fortune exists. But Count Panin, and the courtiers who seconded his design, played up to this new fancy of the empress, and blackened the name of Orloff, while they bestowed praises upon his timid rival. In this case, the docility of the latter was useful to him; he did as he was directed by the more accomplished intriguers who were interested in his success, and soon was appointed by the empress as her chamberlain; in which situation her smiles and her magnificent presents left no doubt concerning the familiarity which existed between them.

When Gregory Orloff learnt that a rival had supplanted him in the affections of the empress, he was filled with rage and astonishment. Trusting that his presence would revive a passion which his pride forbade him to believe altogether extinguished, he abandoned Fokshiani without the permission of the empress, and giving up the peace negotiations, hastened to St. Petersburg. On arriving at the gates of that city, an officer approached his carriage, and presented him with an imperial order forbidding him to enter. The discarded favourite regarded it with silent astonishment, and directed his servants to drive him to Gatchina, one of his country-seats.

When Catherine, who knew the violence of Orloff's temper, received intelligence that he had quitted Fokshiani, she experienced some alarm; and apprehensive that he might make his appearance in spite of her, gave orders to double the guard of the palace, and to place sentinels at the gate of the new favourite. As Orloff had a key to his apartments, she even caused the locks to be changed. These precautions were needless; nothing was to be feared from the once powerful and arrogant courtier. No sooner was it known that he had lost the favour of the empress, than he had not a follower left; while those who had hitherto been his enemies in secret, showed themselves on all sides. He at first braved the anger of the empress by refusing to surrender his employments; but Catherine had no desire to punish where she had once loved. With a politic indulgence she entered upon a compromise with him; and Orloff, overcome by her bounty, consented to leave Russia, and set out on a tour through various parts of Europe. The empress rewarded his submission with a present of 100,000 roubles, the brevet of a pension of 150,000, a magnificent service of plate, and an estate with 6,000 peasants upon it. He had already obtained a patent of prince of the Roman empire, and Catherine desired that he should take the title, no doubt wishing that her former favourite should appear before the world with a magnificence befitting the position he had once held.

The arrogant demands of the Russians led to the rupture of the congress of Fokshiani, but negotiations for peace between Turkey and Russia were afterwards resumed at Bucharest. While they were pending, the Russians concluded with a new khan of the Crimea a treaty, by which he declared himself independent of the sultan, and placed himself under the protection of the empress. He at the same time surrendered to her the forts of Kertch and Yenikale, together with the territory belonging to them. The Porte, incensed at this, sent a squadron into the Black Sea to oppose the war ships of the empress, which already breasted its waters.

Catherine's attention was now particularly directed to Poland, where she saw herself about to reap the result of the political intrigues she had so patiently carried on. Frederic the Great was her accomplice in the design of partitioning that miserable country, which fell a prey to the ambition



of its neighbours through the vices of its nobles and its priesthood, the weakness of its kings, and the slavery of its people. Frederic had drawn Austria into the scheme; and the emperor, Joseph II., was perfectly willing to share in the plunder. England had been deluded by a highly profitable commercial treaty, which bound up her interests with those of Russia, and ensured her neutrality. France—then in the oppressed and exhausted condition which, twenty years later, produced that terrible revolution which astonished the world—she disregarded. The nations of the Baltic, though they felt jealous of the growing preponderance of Russia, were not in a condition to oppose her designs; and the Turks had enough to do to defend their own territory without sending assistance to Poland.

Prussia and Austria both seized some pretext for pouring their troops into Poland, which was already occupied by those of Russia. The rest of Europe looked on in silence, and wondered why three formidable powers, in a time of peace, should seize upon a country the independence of which had been guaranteed by the most solemn treaties. They were not long kept in suspense. The treaty that had been entered into by the three powers was avowed, and the ambassadors of each of them presented to the king and the diet of Poland declarations in support of it. The internal troubles of Poland, it was said, were productive of danger to neighbouring states, who were consequently obliged, at a great expense, to take measures of precaution, in order to secure the tranquillity of their own frontiers. Russia, Prussia, and Austria were therefore resolved on terminating the dissensions of Poland, and at the same time, of satisfying certain claims they had upon that country, by taking possession of such parts of its territory as would serve to fix more natural and certain bounds between it and them. In the autumn of 1772, each of the three partitioning powers issued a specification of the particular territory which they had respectively agreed to appropriate. In these documents, the sovereigns of Prussia and Austria merely commanded the inhabitants of the districts to which they laid claim, to take an oath of allegiance to them, and to conduct themselves as loyal subjects. The inclination of the people as to this sudden transference of their loyalty was not taken into consideration. Catherine acted

with a greater liberality. She solemnly promised her new subjects the free and public exercise of their religion, together with the perfect security of their property. She added, that looking upon them now as her dear children, she gave them equal shares in all the rights, liberties, and prerogatives enjoyed by her ancient subjects. In return for these graces, she expected they would render themselves worthy of them by a sincere love of their new country, and an inviolable attachment to its sovereign. Catherine, at the same time, commanded them to take an oath of allegiance to her in the course of a month; but she allowed any of the nobility or landholders who were not disposed to do so, three months to sell their lands before they left the country.

Stanislaus Augustus, the king of Poland, while his country was thus being torn asunder by strangers, was a sort of honourable prisoner in his capital, which was surrounded with foreign troops. He was required by the representatives of the partitioning powers to give a sort of sanction to their act of spoliation. They insisted that a diet, presided over by the sovereign, should solemnly cede to them the provinces of which they had already possessed themselves. On the 19th of April, 1773, a diet met to deliberate with the bayonet at its bosom. Bribes and threats were used to influence the votes of the deputies, and that so successfully, that after some resistance, the diet confirmed the dismemberment of the country. No sooner was this done, than several of the principal members of the diet went to the king, and reproached him with the ruin of their country; for though he had declared loudly against the partition, he was suspected, by those who knew his former devotion to the empress Catherine, of still being the creature of her will. At first he answered his irritated nobles gently; but as his moderation only encouraged them to use expressions of insult, he rose from his seat, and throwing his hat upon the floor, said haughtily—"Gentlemen, I am weary of listening to you. The partition of our unhappy country is a consequence of your ambition, of your dissensions, and your eternal disputes. It is to yourselves alone that you ought to attribute your misfortunes. As for me, if no more territory should be left me than could be covered by this hat, I should nevertheless be still, in the eyes of all Europe, your lawful but unhappy king."



By this, the first dismemberment of Poland, it lost an extent of territory inhabited by nearly 5,000,000 of persons, and comprising more than one-third of its whole extent. Of this territory, Russia took 3,444 square leagues; Austria, 2,700; and Prussia, 900; but Frederic's portion, though the smallest and least populous, was also the richest and most enterprising.\* Some nobles of the usurped provinces published protests against this proceeding; but these were of no avail in a country overrun with foreign armies. The three powers then brought forward, and induced the diet to adopt, the plan of a new constitution, which was to obviate the defects of the old one. Its real object, and its actual effect, was to confirm the dangerous privileges of the nobility, and aggravate the confusion from which the country suffered. These were, indeed, calamitous; much of the land was reduced to a mere desert, the inhabitants being either exterminated or forcibly carried off into Russia or Prussia. The extortions imposed by Frederic, during the occupation of Poland by Prussian troops, were enormous; and the actual sovereignty of Poland, so far as any could be said to exist, was in the hands of the Russian ambassador, who never neglected an opportunity of treating its legitimate monarch with the most galling insult.

"The violent dismemberment and partition of Poland," said an author who wrote a few years after the events we have just narrated, "without the pretence of war, or even the colour of right, is to be considered as the first very great breach in the modern political system of Europe. It is not, said the politicians of the continent, sapping by degrees the constitution of our great western republic, it is laying the axe at once to the root, in such a manner as threatens the total overthrow of the whole. The surprise of a town, the invasion of an insignificant province, or the election of a prince who had neither abilities to be feared nor virtues to be loved, would some years ago have armed one-half of Europe, and elicited the attention of the other. We now behold the destruction of a great kingdom, with the consequent disarrangement of power, dominion, and commerce, with as much indifference as we could read an

account of the extermination of one horde of Tartars by another, in the days of Ghen-gis Khan or Tamerlane.

"The idea of considering Europe as a vast commonwealth; of the several parts being distinct and separate, though politically and commercially united; of keeping them independent, notwithstanding their inequality in power; and of preventing any one, by any means, from becoming too powerful for the rest, was great and liberal, and though the result of barbarism, founded upon the most enlarged principles of the wisest policy. It is owing to this system, that this small part of the world has acquired so astonishing a superiority over the rest of the globe. The fortune and glory of Greece proceeded from a similar system of policy, though formed upon a smaller scale. Both her fortune and glory expired along with the system.

"Some of the most desert provinces in Asia have been repeatedly the seats of arts, arms, commerce, and literature. These potent and civilised nations have repeatedly perished for want of any union or system of policy of this nature. Some Scythian or other barbarian has been suffered, unnoticed, to subdue his neighbouring tribes; each new conquest was made an instrument to the succeeding, until at length become irresistible, he swept whole empires, with their arts and sciences, off the face of the earth. In the same manner, a banditti, who were afterwards called Romans, were suffered to accumulate power, until they had subdued the bravest and fiercest nations, and become the masters of the best part of the world. Each state looked on with indifference, or enjoyed a malignant pleasure at the ruin of its neighbour, without reflecting that the weapons and power of which he was deprived would be quickly employed to its own destruction.

"It will not be denied, that the idea of supposing a balance of power has in some cases been carried to an extreme; that by artfully employing it to operate upon the passions and jealousies of mankind, it has been made an engine subservient to the designs of interested and ambitious persons; and has, perhaps, thereby been productive of some unnecessary wars. The same objections might be made to that

\* Notwithstanding the smallness of the tract acquired by Frederic, its importance to him was immense, for it united the kingdom of Prussia with Pomerania and the marches of Brandenburg, which it

had previously separated in a very awkward manner, so that Voltaire was accustomed to compare his illustrious friend's dominions to a long pair of gaiters.



glorious jealousy with respect to civil liberty, which has been the admiration and envy of all ages; which, for the happiness of mankind, should subsist in full vigour in every state in the world, and, to their misfortune and punishment, is scarcely alive in a few; even that, the noblest quality of the human mind, has been productive of wars and other evils."

We may mention that, so perfectly was England seduced by her commercial interests to a connivance at the aggression of Russia and the other partitioning powers, that, when George III. met his reassembled parliament on the 26th of November, 1772 (a time when the dismemberment of Poland was known to all the world), his speech did not contain a single allusion to that startling

innovation. As if approving all that had been done, George expressed his satisfaction at seeing there was reason to hope that the war which had so long unhappily prevailed in one part of Europe, was drawing to a close; and he added, that although there was no probability of England being involved in these troubles, yet their discontinuance would afford a fairer prospect for the duration of peace, which he trusted would not be affected by recent alterations in Europe. Both houses of parliament gave a formal and empty response to his speech, and neither of them said a word about the political annihilation of Poland, the Russian proceedings in the Archipelago, and the growing power and expanding territory of the empress Catherine!

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

HOSTILITIES BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY; FIRST MARRIAGE OF THE GRAND-DUKE PAUL; PEACE OF KAINARDSHI; PUGATSCHIEF THE IMPOSTOR, AND THE GREAT COSSACK REBELLION; PUGATSCHIEF IS BETRAYED AND EXECUTED; CONCILIATORY MEASURES OF THE EMPRESS.

WHILE the attention of the empress Catherine was chiefly occupied in the division of Poland, her army and her fleet were engaged, with variable success, with those of the Turks. The Danube, which formed the boundary between the hostile armies, was the scene of many furious encounters, which not unfrequently terminated in favour of the Ottoman arms. The Russians, harassed by frequent attacks, and suffering greatly from the climate, were losing immense numbers of their best troops in ineffectual service. The empress, on learning this, sent despatches to Marshal Romantsoff, desiring to be informed why he did not give battle to the enemy. The answer the general returned was, that the grand-vizier had three times more people than he, and might easily find his advantage in such an event. Catherine, in reply, wrote with a proud impatience—"The Romans never asked after the number of their enemies, but where they were, in order to fight them."

Neither on land or by sea were the Russians so successful as they anticipated being. Some trifling engagements took place between the hostile fleets on the Black Sea;

but such was the badness of the vessels, and the inexperience of the sailors on both sides, that their contests did little more than show that Russia was about as ill suited to acquire, as Turkey was to defend, the dominion of those boisterous waters. In the Archipelago the career of the Russian fleet was a chequered one; some hollow successes were obtained, and some exhausting reverses suffered. In the spring of 1773 the Russian fleet made an unsuccessful descent upon the island of Negropont, in which they suffered great loss; the Turks cutting off all the men that were landed. Chiefly in consequence of the numbers of their sick the Russians quitted the isle of Paros, and sent a part of their fleet to Leghorn, where they refitted their ships, and fixed a hospital. The other vessels were employed in desultory expeditions of a piratical character. They made several descents upon the islands of Cyprus, Candia, and others, which were attended with no further advantage than the accumulation of plunder. They were, however, so far from being always successful in these affairs, that four sacks, full of Russian heads, were sent from Stanchio to Constantinople,



as a proof of the reception they had met with in that island.

Catherine had, for some time, desired to see her son, the Grand-duke Paul, contract an alliance which should result in ensuring the continuance of the imperial dynasty. Paul was weak in constitution and cold in temperament; and the empress entertained some fears that he might be indisposed or incapable of giving heirs to the empire. Some of her confidants undertook to dispel her doubts. For this purpose they engaged an attractive Polish lady, a widow, named Sophia Ossipovna, to melt the coldness of the prince, and win him to her endearments. Paul was captivated; the lady bore him a son,\* and the empress was satisfied and convinced. She shortly afterwards caused Paul to be married to the Princess Wilhelmina, one of the daughters of the landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt. As a preliminary, the lady embraced the Greek mode of worship; and the marriage, which was conducted with great magnificence, took place on the 10th of October, 1773.

Catherine was fond of communicating with distinguished men of letters, and Voltaire and Diderot were the correspondents whom she most distinguished. She had several times invited them to visit her at St. Petersburg. Voltaire had ever declined; but this year Diderot accepted the hospitality of the empress, and travelled to St. Petersburg, where he was received with much distinction and liberality. The apostle of materialism wrote to a friend, that "while in a country called the land of freemen, he felt as a slave; but now, in a land called the country of slaves, he felt like a freeman." Every day, after dinner, Catherine conversed with him on philosophy, legislation, or politics. Diderot unfolded his principles concerning the rights of nations, with his usual eloquence and enthusiasm. The empress used to make him sit beside her; and, in his warmth, he sometimes hit her on the knee with the back of his hand—a familiarity which she never resented or seemed displeased at. But, though she seemed delighted to converse with the philosopher, he did not often win her to the adoption of his principles. "Monsieur Diderot," she remarked, "is a hundred years old in many respects; but, in others, he is no more than ten."

\* This child received the name of Simeon Velikoi. He was of a gentle and modest disposition, and at an early age entered the Russian navy. He afterwards formed one of twelve officers sent by the em-

Immense preparations were made, both by the Turks and the Russians, for the campaign of 1774. The army of the grand-vizier, on the Danube, was reported to amount to no less than 400,000 combatants, while the Porte also fomented rebellions amongst the Cossacks, and troubles with the Tartars of the Crimea. The Russians also had a powerful army on the Danube, under the command of Marshal Romantsoff, beneath whom served Generals Soltikoff, Suwarrow, and Kamenskoi.

Notwithstanding the enormous numerical force of the Turks, they were defeated in several engagements; and the severe reverses they suffered led, as was usual, to a spirit of insubordination amongst them. They not only fought furiously amongst themselves, but deserted by whole detachments. Their general had fixed his camp at Shumla, at a considerable distance from the main body of his army. Romantsoff soon discerned this vital error, and, surrounding the camp of the vizier, he cut off the communication of that thoughtless general with the great body of his troops, and also with his magazines. The vizier, unable to obtain any succours, to retire, or to stand a battle, resolved to sue for peace.

The Russians had no objection to peace, but they would abate nothing of their previous demands. To these the Turks now agreed, and the treaty was concluded at Kutschuk-Kainardshi, in Bulgaria. By it Russia obtained the free navigation of the Black Sea, and all other Ottoman seas, together with the passage of the Dardanelles, with the sole restriction that she should never have more than one armed vessel in the Bosphorus. Russia retained Azoff, Taganrog, Kertch, and Kinburn, but restored the rest of her conquests. But the condition which perhaps most of all galled the pride of the Porte, was the declaration of the independence of the Crimea; though that government does not appear to have foreseen that Catherine only desired to obtain the independence of the Crimea, that she might be the better enabled to incorporate it with her own dominions, to which, indeed, in a geographical sense, it properly belongs. Besides these concessions, the empress obtained from the Porte that tract of land lying on

press Catherine to learn the art of navigation in England. While in this country he volunteered into the English navy, and died in the West Indies in 1797.



the Euxine between the Bug and the Dnieper, a pecuniary equivalent for the expenses of the war, and a recognition of her imperial title. By this treaty, therefore, she derived the twofold advantage of increasing her own power and decreasing that of her enemy. The commerce of the Euxine, and the mart of the Levant, opened to her a source of immense riches. The protection which she granted the Tartars furnished her with the means of dividing them, and of conquering their country. The acquisition of the Polish Ukraine put her in a capacity of more easily carrying on a war in the regions of the Danube, of overawing the Ottoman empire, and of completing the ruin of Poland. The establishment of discipline among the Cossacks added to her armies an excellent cavalry; and the empress beheld her influence and her reputation extending throughout Europe. Great joy prevailed at St. Petersburg in consequence of the conclusion of peace, and eight days were devoted to public festivities. That the spirit of gladness might be universal, all prisoners, except those charged with high treason, were released, and many of the unfortunate outcasts who had been exiled to Siberia permitted to return.

In fact, peace was almost as requisite to Russia as to Turkey. The finances of the empress were in a dilapidated state; Moscow and the adjacent country had not recovered the ravages of the plague, which had made its appalling appearance in the armies of the empress, and had even extended to her fleet in the Archipelago. An insurrection, to which we shall presently refer, was rife in the provinces of Kazan, Astracan, and Orenburg; while from seventy to one hundred thousand Kalmuck families had, in consequence of some oppression to which they had been subjected, abandoned the steppes of Russia, and sought the protection of the emperor of China. Catherine, who could ill afford to lose so considerable a number of the inhabitants of her thinly-populated dominions, demanded the restitution of the runaways. To this she received a dignified refusal; the supreme tribunal of Peking saying—"Their sovereign was not so unjust a prince as to deliver up his subjects to foreigners, nor so cruel a father as to drive away children who returned to the bosom of their family. That he had no intimation of the design of the Kalmucks till the moment of their arrival; and that then,

without delay, he caused to be restored to them the habitations that had belonged to them from time immemorial."

Catherine herself, also, though equal to immense exertions, yet desired repose. Though triumphant over her enemies, the admiration of Europe, idolised by her courtiers, she was still frequently a prey to secret disquietudes of great severity. Though constantly projecting an extension of her large dominions, she yet dreaded the thought of being hurled from the throne. Sometimes trembling for her life, yet she gaily discoursed of the long career she had probably still to run. On one occasion she found a paper in her cabinet, in which mention was made of a threatened assassination; but never did she show herself more confident and sedate than on that day. Though sometimes distracted with doubts, she never abandoned those pleasures to which she had always been so much devoted. She frequently went from the council to the ball-room and the theatre, and from important sittings of the senate to the most frivolous amusement.

Catherine was growing weary of her favourite Vassiltschikoff, who, though he did not abuse the trust placed in him, and conducted himself with much moderation, was yet rather a passive and insipid character. At this point, Prince Orloff returned unexpectedly from his travels; and although the empress at first refused to see him, she commanded Vassiltschikoff to retire to Moscow, and loaded him with presents for his complaisant obedience. Orloff soon made his appearance at court, where the empress received him with cheerfulness. He aspired to gain his old ascendancy over the heart of the empress; but he was deceived in this respect. She only desired his presence and his influence, that she might be the better able to oppose a faction which she feared was forming under the auspices of her son the Grand-duke Paul.

Clouds appeared to be gathering in the horizon of Catherine. For some time discontent had reigned among great bodies of the people, on account of their sufferings from the plague and the war; and the boors were almost desperate at seeing their sons successively taken from them to perish by the sword of the Turks, or the pestilence which raged among the Russian armies on the Danube. The empress had never been a favourite with the ancient nobility of the empire, while the priesthood secretly hated



her, on account of the wealth and privileges she withheld from them. The latter, ready to adopt any means of vengeance, privately spread abroad a report that Peter III. was still living, and would soon make his appearance to claim the throne which was his right. So early as the year 1767, a shoemaker of Voronetch declared himself to be the deceased czar; but he was soon taken, and executed as an impostor. Three years afterwards, a Russian soldier, who had deserted from his regiment, made the same dangerous assertion; and although he received a great deal of support from the priests, shared the same fate as his predecessor. Stefano Piccolo, a foreigner, who had served among the Austrian irregulars in the Seven Years' War, and afterwards entered into the Russian service, was the third adventurer in this direction. An insurrection followed, and his claim was soon exposed; but he himself was fortunate enough to escape. A fourth and fifth impostor, who each claimed to be the murdered Peter, perished by the hands of the executioner. These miserable attempts were but a gloomy prelude to the tragedy that was to follow.

The next attempt to personate the deceased czar was made in 1773, and with remarkable success. The chief actor in it was Ikhelman Pugatschef, the son of a Cossack of the Don. In early life he served as a common soldier in the Russian army, and fought against Frederic of Prussia. He afterwards served in the campaign of 1769 against the Turks, and was present at the siege of Bender. When that town surrendered he applied for his dismission, and on its being refused him, deserted and fled to Poland. There he was concealed by some hermits of the Greek church, whom he sometimes entertained by narrations of his various adventures. One day he mentioned, that while he was in the Russian service, an officer, after contemplating him for some time, observed, "If the emperor Peter III., my master, were not dead, I should believe that I saw him once more in thee." The hermits paid but little attention to this anecdote, but a circumstance occurred shortly afterwards which recalled it vividly to their minds. One of their companions who had been absent, seeing Pugatschef on his return, exclaimed suddenly, "Is not that the emperor, Peter III.?" On this the monks conceived the project of inducing Pugatschef to assume the character of the

murdered czar, and found no difficulty in winning him to a participation in the proposed deception.

As soon as the monks considered the deserter to be sufficiently prepared in the details of the character he was to assume, he proceeded to Little Russia, and putting on the garb of a patriarch, bestowed his benedictions on the people with all the solemnity of a new apostle. He had no desire, he told them, to recover his lost dignities; declared that he was entirely weaned from the vanities of the world; that his life had long been devoted to piety; and that as soon as he had placed his dear son upon the throne, he would again retire to terminate his days in mortification and prayer. The ignorant and superstitious people listened with wonder and belief! Pugatschef was soon at the head of a great number of followers, and was even countenanced by many of the nobility of that locality.

From Orenburg, where the revolt began, Pugatschef went to the Cossacks of the Don, where he was arrested on a charge of exciting the people to sedition, and sent to take his trial at Kasan. There the discontented priests supplied him with money, with which he corrupted his guards, and then made his escape. Gathering a few of his old comrades around him, they went down the Volga as far as the mouth of the Irghis, proceeded up that river, and penetrated into the desert. There, from day to day, his followers increased, and soon became sufficiently formidable to encourage him publicly to declare that he was the emperor Peter III., and had been delivered by a miracle from the hands of his assassins; that a soldier, who greatly resembled him, had been substituted as a victim to their fury; and that the report of his death was a fiction coined by the court to compose the minds of the people, and reconcile them to the usurpation of Catherine.

Serious discontents prevailed among the Cossacks, especially those who resided in the neighbourhood of the river Yaik. The chief of these arose from religious differences, for the Cossacks of that locality belonged to a party of separatists known as Roskolniki, or heretics; though they called themselves Starovertzi, or believers according to the old faith. The pretext on which Peter III. had been dethroned, was his attempt to alter the dress and rites of the priests, and to curtail the splendid revenues of the church. The Cossacks, therefore, now be-



lieved that he was a true Roskolnik, who had been deprived of his crown on account of his adherence to their tenets. What, then, more natural than that believing him to be alive, they should receive him with open arms?

In the month of September, 1773, Pugatschef and his followers made their appearance before the town of Yaitsk, which contained 5,000 Cossacks and two field regiments, and summoned it to surrender. To these troops the impostor issued a manifesto, in which he declared "that he was Peter III., who had escaped from Ropscha at the instant when his assassins were about to murder him; that the traitors who had dethroned him, and dreaded his return, had falsely invented and propagated the report of his death; that he had been obliged to put on the disguise of a Cossack, to bear arms for his persecutors, and afterwards to conceal himself among the true and faithful believers, to whom he had made himself known; that having learnt, at length, that the brave Cossacks of the Yaik were resolved to free themselves from the yoke of the usurpatrix, he was come to put himself into their hands, and to offer to march with them to victory and to vengeance." Immediately 500 of the Cossacks came over to him, accompanied by eleven of their officers; many of the others soon followed their example; and the commander of the place, who remained true to his duty, Pugatschef seized and hanged.

It would be both wearisome and unnecessary to follow the steps of this barbarian in his career of conquest and of cruelty. He acted with great boldness and some military skill, and defeated many bodies of troops sent against him. Lured by the hope of plunder and the excitement of a warlike life, immense numbers joined his standard; and, during the winter, a body of 10,000 Kalmucks revolted, and went over to him. At first Pugatschef conducted himself with an appearance of moderation; he wore an episcopal robe, gave his benediction to the people, and constantly repeated that he was destitute of all ambition, and that he only desired to place his son, the grand-duke, on the throne, and then end his days in religious retirement. Though this mode of conduct attracted to him many followers, he soon became tired of it, and the real character of the man revealed itself. He omitted no opportunity for extending the terror of his arms, and shrunk from no

cruelty that might promote that end. He availed himself of every exhibition of weakness or imprudence on the part of the authorities, and displayed so much activity, that scarcely had he reduced a town to submission, before he led his followers to engage some force sent against him. Continued success rendered him arrogant, and throwing aside all restraint, he gave free scope to his savage temper and his licentious passions. While besieging Orenburg he caused all the officers and gentry of the surrounding country to be massacred, together with their wives and children; resolving, as he said, to shed the very last drop of blood of the haughty and tyrannical nobility.

The spirit of rebellion extended itself as far as Moscow. Catherine felt alarmed at its extent, and recalling General Bibikoff from the frontiers of Turkey, gave him the command of a considerable army, with orders to march against the insurgents. At the same time she issued a manifesto, which was circulated through the principal towns of the empire. It promised a pardon to all deserters—especially to those of the Cossacks of the Don and the Yaik—who should return to their duty, and offered a reward of 100,000 roubles for the head of Pugatschef. The rebel chief also published his manifestoes, and affixed to them the name of Peter III. By one of these documents he declared all the serfs of the empire to be emancipated. He even caused roubles to be coined, bearing an impress of his likeness, with the inscription, "Peter III., emperor and autocrat of all the Russias."

General Bibikoff led an army of 35,000 men against the rebels, and obtained several successes over them, but without much affecting their number or decreasing their atrocities. His good fortune, however, soon abandoned him; for, having detached Prince Galitzin with a considerable body of troops, he was unexpectedly attacked by Pugatschef, and lost his life in the severe engagement which followed. Prince Galitzin, on his return, attacked the rebels, who fought desperately for a period of six hours, when, after a great number had perished, Pugatschef and the rest took to flight, and escaped to the shelter of the Ural Mountains.

Notwithstanding this heavy reverse, the active rebel soon reappeared at the head of a considerable force, and made himself master of several towns to the east of the mountains. Such as offered any resistance he gave to the flames. Here he was again



attacked and defeated; and after being hunted from place to place, though not without occasionally inflicting sanguinary checks upon his pursuers, he crossed the Volga, and regained the desert with no more than 300 followers, in whose bravery and fidelity he placed his last hope.

Fortune had not yet deserted him, and every day he was joined by numbers of Cossacks, Kalmucks, and boors, who, attracted by the name of liberty, had abandoned their labour and taken to arms. Elated by his popularity and the seeming attachment of his people, he resolved to march upon Moscow, where the populace, never perfectly reconciled to the sway of the empress, waited for him as a redeemer and champion of their cause. Fortunately, as he was beginning his march, he received information that the empress had just concluded a war with the Turks; and, apprehensive that he should have to contend with the greater part of the returning army of Marshal Romantsoff, he thought it more prudent to turn his arms in another direction. Learning that some Russian regiments were encamped on the shores of the Volga, he descended that river, fell upon them by surprise, and routed them utterly. Pugatschef also took several forts, and the town of Dmitressk, the governor of which he inhumanly caused to be impaled. The rebel chief here showed himself as a ruffian altogether destitute of merciful or generous emotions. Hearing that the astronomer Lovitch, member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg, was employed in the neighbourhood in taking levels for a projected canal, he commanded the unoffending man of science to be brought before him. As soon as the astronomer made his appearance, Pugatschef ordered his men to lift him on their pikes, in order, said he derisively, "that he may be nearer the stars." The unfortunate man was then cut to pieces by the attending Cossacks.

The career of the successful ruffian was approaching to a conclusion. The empress had sent General Panin to arrest his progress; and an intimate associate of Pugatschef, who had been taken prisoner, was suborned to betray him. But it was to the indefatigable exertions of a Colonel Mikelson that Catherine was peculiarly indebted for the suppression of this dangerous rebellion. He pursued the insurgents without intermission, marching over deserts of trackless snow without a guide,

and, at times, almost without food. In every collision he had with the rebels he was always successful; and not only did he surprise and defeat them, while encumbered with baggage in a mountain pass, but cut off their convoys, and reduced them to a state of famine. Again deserted by the great bulk of his followers, Pugatschef had sought for safety in the deserts beyond the Volga. His miserable associates, suffering from hunger and thirst, and no longer able to hope for any change in his fortune, resolved to betray him, and to purchase their own safety with the life of their leader. As he was seeking a meal by gnawing the bones of a horse, the only food left him, several of his associates approached, and the first observed, "Come, thou hast been emperor long enough." Pugatschef shattered the arm of the foremost of his assailants by a pistol-shot, but he was soon overpowered and bound by them. They then sent a message to the Russian authorities, relating what they had done.

Pugatschef was at first placed in close confinement, together with several of his principal accomplices, but he was afterwards carried to Moscow in an iron cage. The baffled rebel refused all sustenance, and appeared resolved on self-destruction; but his keepers found means to compel him to eat. He afterwards counterfeited madness, but without producing the effect he intended. He was subjected to many examinations for the purpose of discovering if his career of imposture had been suggested or aided by any distinguished persons. Both the Turkish and the French governments were suspected of having excited this formidable insurrection for the purpose of giving the empress full employment at home. In a letter which Catherine wrote the French monarch, informing him that the leader of the revolt was in her power, she said, "I shall keep his depositions secret, that they may not aggravate the disgrace of those who set him on."

The delinquent was tried by the senate, assisted by a special commission; and the empress recommended them to be satisfied with a simple confession of his crime, and not to apply the torture for the purpose of extracting the names of his accomplices. She was prudently apprehensive lest his declarations might oblige her to multiply punishments, and plunge the empire into fresh excitement. The empress, however, departed from her customary lenity on this



occasion. Pugatschef was condemned to have his hands and his feet cut off, and then to be quartered alive. Several of his associates were to be hanged at the same time. He was taken to the place of execution in a cart painted black, and compelled to hold a lighted candle in his hand. A priest sat on each side of him, and behind stood the executioner with two large axes placed on a block. The preparations that had been made created a great sensation in the minds of the spectators, but Pugatschef himself beheld them with an undaunted aspect. With a strange insensibility respecting the atrocities he himself had committed, he uttered a wish, as he was driven through the crowd, that if he had done aught amiss, the people would pardon him for the love of God! He ascended the scaffold with perfect calmness and self-possession; but, happily, the revolting sentence passed upon him was not literally fulfilled. Either from an error on the part of the executioner, or from a sense of humanity in the man, he struck off the head of the rebel first, and severed the hands and feet afterwards. Some persons have said that the punishment of Pugatschef was thus mitigated in consequence of a secret order from the empress to that effect; but that is not probable, as the unfortunate executioner had his tongue cut out, and was sent to Siberia, for presuming to alter the nature of the punishment to which so notorious a criminal was condemned. Five of the principal associates of Pugatschef suffered with him, while eighteen more underwent the knout, and were exiled to Siberia. His rebellion had cost the destruction of a great number of towns, and of upwards of 250 villages, besides interrupting the works at the mines of Orenburg, and the whole trade of Siberia. The empress, to efface all memorial of the revolt, changed the name of the river Yaïk into that of the Ural; and the town of Yaïtsk, where Pugatschef commenced his rebellion, into that of Uralsk. She also

prohibited the discussion of the particulars of this prolonged insurrection, forbade any reproaches to be used on its account, and pronounced a decree of silence and oblivion on all matters concerning it.

After the suppression of this rebellion, which had threatened to shake her throne, Catherine adopted many measures of a nature calculated to produce contentment in the minds of the people, and to win their attachment. She abolished a number of the ancient taxes, especially such as were considered discouraging to agriculture, or oppressive to particular provinces or orders of the people. With a remarkable generosity she also lent considerable sums of money, without interest, for a specified term of years, to those provinces which had been devastated by the rebels, and were consequently suffering from famine. Those criminals who had undergone long periods of imprisonment, or had otherwise suffered severely for their offences, she set at liberty. The same humanity was shown, under certain restrictions, to imprisoned debtors; while the heirs of those who lay under pecuniary obligations to the crown, were released from them. These prudent measures were so far successful that the disturbed districts were tranquillised, and the insurgents everywhere returned to their duty.

"Thus," it has been well observed, "Russia enjoyed her power, influence, and glory, with a noble and splendid magnificence. All her affairs were conducted upon a great and extensive system, and all her acts were in a grand style. She sat supreme between Europe and Asia, and looked like the dictator of both. In her was seen a great but still growing empire, which, not having reached the summit of her destined power, felt life and vigour glowing in every part. The successes and consequences of the war enlarged the spirit, extended the views, and dignified the minds of the people. In such a state everything is bold and masculine. Even its vices and crimes are great."\*

\* That is, not estimable, but having a certain air of grandeur from their being absolutely and widely removed from littleness and meanness. Great crime has often so dazzled the world by its brilliancy, that men regard the author with emotions of admiration; but the criminal who crawls through life heaping

meanness upon meanness, and doing villanous work from vile and utterly selfish considerations, is not only wicked, but disgusting. No sane man can apologise for that which is vicious; but yet even Edmund Burke exclaimed, "that vice lost half its evil by losing all its grossness."



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

POTEMKIN BECOMES FAVOURITE OF THE EMPRESS; STATE VISIT OF CATHERINE TO MOSCOW; POTEMKIN ENDEAVOURS TO INDUCE THE EMPRESS TO MARRY HIM; HE IS DISCARDED AS THE LOVER, BUT REMAINS AS THE FRIEND OF HIS MISTRESS; DEATH OF THE GRAND-DUCHESS; PAUL MARRIES THE PRINCESS OF WIRTEMBERG; CATHERINE'S THIRST FOR DISTINCTION; HER INTRIGUES IN SWEDEN; DISTURBANCES IN THE CRIMEA; CLAIMS OF RUSSIA WITH RESPECT TO MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA; NEW TREATY BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY; COLDNESS OF THE EMPRESS TOWARDS ENGLAND; SPLENDOUR OF THE COURT OF CATHERINE.

WHEN the empress dismissed her lover Vassiltschikoff, Prince Gregory Orloff was again taken into favour. But this was but for a short time, for Catherine had been impressed with the manly beauty and noble air of Potemkin. She remembered with pleasure that, on the day of entrance into St. Petersburg, during the revolution of 1762, Potemkin, then a mere youth, on observing her to be without a plume in her hat, had gallantly ridden up and presented her with his.

The coarseness of Orloff's manners were not calculated to revive a cold attachment, and the empress secretly bestowed her smiles on the handsome Potemkin. Elated by this prosperity, he one day boasted to Alexis Orloff of the favour he enjoyed, and even ventured to assert that he could remove from court any person to whom he had taken a dislike. Orloff returned a haughty reply; sharp words ensued, and Potemkin received a blow, which eventually deprived him of an eye. In addition to this, the empress yielded to the solicitations of Gregory, and Potemkin was compelled to abandon the court. Retiring to Smolensk he remained almost a year in solitude, suffering much from vexation and from the injury to his eye.\* Sometimes he expressed his intention of turning monk, as thousands of worldly and disappointed men have done before him; at others, he gave way to the most extravagant hopes. At length an ardent and submissive letter, which he wrote to the empress, had the effect not only of producing his recall, but of restoring to him the full possession of her favour. He arrived during the absence of Gregory Orloff on a hunting excursion; and the latter, on his return, soon

discovered that his reproaches and his complaints were alike unavailing.

Potemkin was installed into the office of favourite during the year 1774, with certain formalities, which were afterwards observed towards all on whom the imperial smiles were lavished. Some account of these proceedings is, at the least, curious. When Catherine cast her eyes on one of her subjects with the intention of raising him to the post of favourite, he was invited to dinner by some lady in her confidence, and she herself, as if accidentally, joined the party. During the entertainment she entered into discourse with the new-comer, to ascertain if he was worthy of the favours she contemplated bestowing upon him. A sign to the confidant expressed her satisfaction, or the reverse; and, in the event of a favourable judgment, that discreet person took care to inform the fortunate courtier of the honour that was intended for him. The following day he received a visit from one of the physicians of the court, who came to inquire into the state of his health; and, in the evening, he accompanied the empress to her palace called the Hermitage, and took possession of the apartment which had been prepared for him. This was situated immediately beneath that of the empress, to which it communicated by a private staircase. The position of general aide-de-camp to her majesty was bestowed upon him, in order that he might accompany her everywhere without attracting reproach or inviting observation. On the day of his being received into favour he was presented with 100,000 roubles, and every succeeding month he found 12,000 on his dressing-table. In addition to this, the marshal of the court was ordered to provide him with a table of twenty-four covers, and to defray all the expenses of his household. The paramour of the empress, or rather her favourite (for that was the polite term in use at the Russian

\* It has been said that he might have been cured of the injury done to his eye, but that, in his impatience, he burst a slight tumour that had formed close to the ball, and deprived himself of the sight of it.



court), attended her at all parties of amusement, at the opera, and on the promenade, and was not permitted to leave the palace without express permission. He was likewise given to understand, that it would not be well received if he conversed familiarly with other women; and if he went to dine with any of his friends, the mistress of the house was always absent. When the favourite no longer possessed the power of making himself agreeable to the empress, he received orders to travel, and from that time he was excluded from all further access to her. But Catherine never dismissed her paramours with anger, or behaved to them otherwise than with a generosity truly imperial. The discarded favourite received such lavish tokens of her past affection as, to some extent, consoled him for the loss of her presence.

The spring of the year 1775 saw the Russian empire recovering from the exhaustion caused by its war against the Turks, and the internal discord and misery resulting from the great Cossack insurrection under Pugatschef. The time of the empress was divided between those sensual and extravagant pleasures to which she was attached, and the cultivation of the arts of peace and the improvement of the country. In these efforts she found an efficient second in Potemkin, who, notwithstanding his frivolity and waywardness, possessed considerable abilities, and of such a character as enabled him to gain a remarkable ascendancy over the empress. So conscious was he of this, that he grew wanton in the exercise of his power, and constantly demanded, and obtained, some new dignity or accession of revenue. When any desire he had formed was disappointed, he grew sullen, and occasionally angry. By such means he entered the council, and supplanted a more able man than himself in the post of vice-president at war. Such presumption necessarily created him a host of enemies, and he was reproached for undertaking all things, yet completing nothing; and of making indiscriminate promises which he never fulfilled. The empress, though much captivated with him, was still conscious of his failings; and it was partly with a view to check his petulance and audacity that she retained her discarded lover (Prince Orloff) at court, and strove to preserve peace between the new favourite and the two fiery brothers. Gregory, regardless of the pleasures, but

jealous of the honours of Potemkin, had sullenly requested permission to retire; but to this the empress would not consent. He then obtained an interview with her, during which he recalled to her mind the obligations which she owed to him; spoke of his zeal and fidelity; and observed, that she had nothing to reproach him with but the circumstance of his not being so young as his rival. Catherine listened with gentleness; and, without denying the wrongs of which he complained, assured him she should ever be his friend. The discontented prince was subdued, and still remained at court her trusted, because probably hopeful, servant.

Early in 1775, the empress paid a visit in great state to Moscow, chiefly for the purpose of exterminating by her presence, her favours, and her liberality, the traces of disaffection and sympathy with the rebel Pugatschef, which lingered there. Though she held in contempt the childish bigotry of the ignorant people, and almost equally ignorant priesthood, and regarded the latter as dangerous subjects, she did not disdain to appeal to this very bigotry, and to use the priesthood, for the purpose of regaining the alienated minds of her subjects in the city and neighbourhood of Moscow. With this object, she carried with her a great number of little figures of saints, and distributed them in the churches and chapels on the road. She also carried a large picture, richly decorated with gold and diamonds, for presentation to the cathedral of Moscow. She was preceded into that city by 600 soldiers from each regiment of the guards, and followed by a brilliant retinue. Two triumphal arches had been erected, at a cost of 40,000 roubles, for the procession to pass under, and everything connected with the entrance of the empress into the ancient city was grand and gorgeous. Only one thing was wanting—but it was the one least indispensable in displays of this nature—the acclamations and enthusiasm of the people. Catherine was unable to charm them into any exhibition of loyalty, or to dispel the dislike which the citizens of Moscow had always entertained towards her. They gazed on the gorgeous cavalcade with silence, and permitted the empress to pass without the least demonstration of welcome. To the Grand-duke Paul, whom they regarded as the son of their murdered sovereign, they displayed a marked contrast of feeling. Such was the enthu-



siasm with which he was received, that it is said, a courtier, either anxious to ascertain his sentiments, or influenced by a treasonous feeling towards the empress, observed to him—"Your imperial highness sees how much you are beloved. Oh, if you would ———." The speaker paused for encouragement to pursue his daring remark; but Paul only responded with a look of reprimand, which implied that he had no intention of plotting against a mother whom he neither loved or was loved by.

Catherine carried out her assumption of devotion at Moscow by performing a pilgrimage on foot, attended by her whole court, to a convent situated at a distance of forty versts. Her chief minister, Count Panin, was the only one not invited to take part in this laborious and dramatic piece of pretended piety. This might have been a slight to the minister, who now troubled himself about little but ease and amusements. He was a great glutton, a great gamester, and a great sleeper; and had become so enormously fat, as to render it extremely doubtful whether he could walk the distance of forty versts, however gently the task might have to be accomplished. So negligent had he become, that an urgent despatch from Marshal Romantzoff (then commanding the expedition against the Turks) was, after an interval of four months, found unanswered in the pocket of Panin's dressing-gown. Such dangerous inattention to the duties of his highly responsible position, raised him up enemies and rivals, amongst whom was Potemkin, who strove to supplant the minister.

The favourite had also another and a higher aim. Like Orloff, he sought to become the husband of the imperial mistress whose favour he enjoyed. During the stay of the court at Moscow, Potemkin, who was so far from being influenced by religious emotions that he treated all modes of faith with a daring and impartial ridicule, put on a semblance of the most austere piety. During Lent he abandoned the luxurious living to which he was much attached, and fed upon nothing but roots and water. Every day he went to confession, and remained for some hours before the pictures of the saints in prayer. It was the confessor to the empress that this crafty schemer selected to listen to the list of his transgressions also. With a penitent air, Potemkin entreated the priest to inform his imperial mistress that his alarmed

conscience would no longer allow him to indulge in an intercourse that was criminal when not sanctioned by marriage. The monk performed his mission; but the shrewd empress at once divined the nature of Potemkin's scruples, and the object he was aiming at. Sending for him, she said, with a dignity tempered by tenderness, that though she had a regard for him, she was sufficiently mistress of herself to subdue her passion; and that, if he was disinclined to fill the post of favourite, she could easily resolve to put another in his place. The disappointed schemer was much humiliated, and even talked of entering the church, and causing himself to be consecrated archbishop: but he soon forgot both his devotion and his resentment in the mingled pursuits of pleasure and ambition.

Whether this trifling and duplicity cost Potemkin the affection of his mistress, or Catherine had merely yielded to a new impression, we cannot say. Certain it is, that, not long after this event, the empress transferred her smiles to a young officer named Zavadofski, whom she first appointed her secretary, and afterwards bestowed upon him the title of favourite. Potemkin, on whom she had recently showered gifts and dignities, received the usual command to set out upon his travels. This command he evaded, even while pretending to obey. Having prepared for his departure, he left the palace; but the very next day returned, and, with the utmost composure, placed himself opposite the empress just as she was sitting down to her customary whist party. Perhaps the discarded favourite had received secret permission to remain in the character of friend; certain it is, that the empress did not appear displeased, but invited him to join the table, saying that he always played luckily. The subject of travelling was not resumed, and Potemkin retained all his posts, his honours, and his influence, and, from the lover, became the friend of his mistress. His abilities, which bore some resemblance to her own, enabled him to retain an ascendancy over her. The amazed courtiers beheld two favourites; and not understanding the somewhat equivocal arrangement entered into, they could not divine which lover the empress preferred. They did not suppose that Potemkin had resigned the latter character; not reflecting that love is usually silent in the presence of ambition.

It is not surprising that Catherine should



entertain some jealousy of the popularity of her son the Grand-duke Paul, especially as a party existed who were desirous of seeing him lay claim to a throne which, assuming him to be really the son of Peter III., undoubtedly belonged to him. The empress viewed with distrust all persons whom she deemed capable of instilling ambitious thoughts into the grand-duke, or who were in a condition to arm on his behalf. Catherine's apprehensions were discerned and turned to account by Frederic of Prussia. Aware that it would be scarcely possible for Paul to succeed in any design upon the Russian throne without his assistance, he always, when desiring any concession from the empress, testified great concern about her son. The alarmed Catherine immediately made any sacrifices whatever for preserving the friendship of the Prussian monarch.

Paul lived in habits of close companionship with Count Andrew Rasumoffski, who had been brought up with him. The count possessed a bold and enterprising spirit; and Catherine, therefore, resolved to effect a division between him and her son. Watching Rasumoffski with this object, she observed some expressive looks pass between him and the grand-duchess, the consort of Paul; and, with a woman's quickness in such matters, she at once concluded that the count had presumed to form some rash design upon the princess. Catherine at once communicated her suspicions to her son, who, though he imagined them to be without foundation, resolved to keep an eye upon his friend, and desired his consort to be more reserved in her behaviour. That the grand-duchess entertained a partiality for Rasumoffski, may be inferred from the fact that she kept up a secret correspondence with him. Some surmise that she went further, and entered into certain political intrigues for the purpose of being revenged upon the empress for having brought her virtue into suspicion. If so, she had no time to execute her designs, as she soon afterwards expired in childbed.\* Rumour, probably engendered from calumny, attributed her death to some

\* On the 26th of April, 1776.

† We are not inclined to credit this suspicion; but Tooke observes—"What served to add credibility to these surmises was, that the midwife who attended the grand-duchess very soon made a great fortune. She lived on a familiar footing with the empress, and talked with Prince Potemkin and Count Besborodko, who often went to dine with her, in the style of these

criminal intervention of the empress.† Paul was much affected by the sudden demise of his consort; but when his grief had somewhat subsided, he examined her papers, and found among them letters from the count. Presenting them to the empress, he demanded vengeance: but she had attained her object—the separation of Paul and Rasumoffski; and, desirous of avoiding an unpleasant publicity, she sent the count as her envoy-extraordinary to Venice.

In Poland, the commissioners of Russia, Austria, and Prussia, could neither agree among themselves nor with the Poles, respecting the exact demarcations of that country. Frederic, therefore, expressed a wish that his brother, Prince Henry, might go and confer with the empress, for the purpose of settling such differences as might have been raised in the matter between the courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin. The prince arrived in Russia a few days before the death of the grand-duchess, and was received with as much distinction as on his first visit. The prince frequently discoursed in private with the empress on the affairs of Poland; and, on one occasion, when Catherine had made some objections, he replied—"Madam, I see one sure method of obviating all difficulty. It may, perhaps, be displeasing to you, on account of Poniatowski; but you will, nevertheless, do well to give it your approbation, since compensation may be offered to that monarch, of greater value to him than the throne, which is continually tottering beneath him. The remainder of Poland must be partitioned." The idea, if not preconceived, was at least welcome to the ambitious empress; and the extinction of Poland as an independent nation was resolved upon.

Scarcely had the grave closed over the Grand-duchess Natolia, the consort of Paul, than the empress directed her attention to providing a second wife for her son, as his first had died without leaving a heir to inherit the empire. She selected the princess of Wirtemberg-Stuttgart, niece to the king of Prussia, and engaged Prince Henry to negotiate the marriage. Frederic gladly

and thou. Dr. Almann was the official accoucheur; but upon being asked by a friend afterwards why he was not present at the delivery, he replied, 'Because, on a previous visit to her imperial highness, the empress said to me, 'Sir, if anything disastrous should happen, you will answer it with your head.' 'Upon which,' continued the doctor, 'I made my obeisance, retired, and have never been at court since.'



accepted a proposal which would lead to a closer alliance between Prussia and Russia; and the young lady herself gave up the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt; to whom she was engaged, in order to accept the offer of the hand of an embryo emperor. Towards the close of the summer of 1776, Paul and Prince Henry, attended by Marshal Romantsoff and a numerous suite, set out on this errand to Berlin. Paul was received by the great Frederic with all the honours due to the heir of the imperial house of Russia. On being presented to the famous soldier, the grand-duke observed—"The motives which bring me from the extremities of the north to these happy dominions, are the desire of assuring your majesty of the friendship and alliance to subsist henceforth for ever between Russia and Prussia; and the eagerness to see a princess destined to ascend the throne of the Russian empire; who, by my receiving her at your hands, I dare to promise you, will be the more dear to myself and to the nation over which she is to reign; and chiefly to see that boon granted me for which I have been ardently wishing so long—the satisfaction of contemplating the greatest of heroes, the admiration of our age, and the astonishment of posterity."

"Instead of which," responded Frederic, "you behold, my prince, a gray-headed valetudinarian, who could never have wished for a superior happiness than that of welcoming within these walls the hopeful heir of a mighty empire, the only son of my best friend, the great Catherine."

Paul was then introduced to the Princess of Wirtemberg, and the ceremony of the nuptial contract took place the same day. Great festivities followed; and, on the 3rd of August, the grand-duke took leave of the king, and returned, loaded with presents, to St. Petersburg. The princess, shortly after, followed, and was united to him on the 13th of October. At the same time she embraced the Greek religion, and assumed the name of Maria Feodorovna. Twenty years afterwards this imperial couple ascended the throne of the Russian empire.

Prince Potemkin had forgotten the lover in the minister, and now occupied the first place about the throne of Catherine. Proud of his political influence and abilities, he left the empress in the tranquil indulgence of her inclination for Zavadofski. The latter had filled the post of favourite for about a year and a-half, when he also became ambi-

tious of political distinction, and endeavoured to supplant Potemkin in his capacity of minister. By so doing he entered on an antagonism with a rival of far greater talents than himself, who at once resolved on his expulsion from court. Potemkin had personal experience both of the sensuality and the inconstancy of the empress, and he therefore placed in her way a young, tall, and handsome Servian named Zoritch, an officer in a regiment of hussars, who had come to St. Petersburg in search of promotion. The artifice succeeded; the fancy of Catherine was ensnared; Zavadofski was abruptly dismissed, loaded with presents; and Zoritch was installed as favourite. The latter was a man of neither education nor experience, and in no way calculated to interfere with the projects of the ambitious Potemkin.

Russia now enjoyed more internal repose than had fallen to its lot since the accession of the empress. The flames of rebellion were extinguished; and disappointed conspiracy, never revealing itself except to be crushed, was content to submit in silence to a government it could not overthrow. Catherine might herself have rested content with what she had done, and have devoted most of her time to those pleasures by which she was so much attracted. But she was ever grasping after personal fame and the aggrandisement of the Russian empire. There was nothing she would not sacrifice in the pursuit of glory, or, indeed, of that celebrity which is not always real fame. As her armies had ceased to gain victories beyond her frontiers, she made Europe resound with the brilliant acts of her munificence, the encouragements she afforded to the arts and sciences, the prizes she assigned to talent, the bounties she showered upon foreigners, and the numerous institutions she created for augmenting the industry and the riches of her people. Ever intent upon carrying out that regeneration of the empire commenced by Peter the Great, she constantly addressed herself to the extension of education and the erection of institutions for national improvement. In the various public schools—most of which had been established by the empress—about 6,800 children, of both sexes, were boarded, clothed, and educated at her expense.

Catherine was too ambitious a sovereign not to be a dangerous neighbour. It has been seen how Poland, distracted by its own dissensions, fell a victim to her ab-



sorbing policy. Denmark had fallen under her influence, and she carried on intrigues in Sweden, with the object of still further weakening a power whose armies, in the time of Charles XII., had made Russia tremble. By promoting the internal dissensions of Sweden (the nobles of which were divided into two factions, called the "Caps" and the "Hats"), Catherine trusted to reduce that country to such a condition as would enable her to subjugate it at some future period. Her efforts, however, were interrupted by the abilities and decision of Gustavus III. Early in 1777, Gustavus, alarmed at seeing that the empress had fitted out a fleet of galleys from Cronstadt, demanded what might be the cause of this armament. He received an unsatisfactory answer; and, although the Russian fleet took no steps against Sweden, Gustavus himself proceeded to St. Petersburg, under the name of the Count of Gothland, to confer personally with the empress upon the subject. Catherine received him with a sumptuous hospitality, and a hollow cordiality was exhibited on both sides. The visit did not, however, raise the empress in the esteem of Gustavus; while it confirmed in her the desire of humbling her youthful rival.

By the late peace with Turkey, the Crimea had been declared independent; but the Tartars of that peninsula had now two khans—the one supported by the Turks, the other by the Russians. The latter desired to place the whole of the Crimea under the khan who enjoyed their insidious protection, in order that they might the more readily despoil him of it. They therefore furnished him with a guard of Russian soldiers, who, being viewed by the ferocious Tartars with jealous feelings, were attacked, and the greater part of them massacred.

The empress immediately poured fresh troops into the Crimea. The Russians attacked and defeated the Tartars opposed to the khan who had received the sanction of the court of St. Petersburg; and his competitor, Selim, was compelled to seek for refuge in the mountains. As the Turkish government refused to acknowledge Sahim-Gueray as the khan of the Crimea, the Porte was given to understand that that country had placed itself under the protection of the empress, who would rather rekindle the flames of war than abandon the cause of the khan whom she supported.

The Turks were exasperated at this haughty message, and seemed resolved to put the dispute to the arbitrament of the sword.

France and other powers interfered to prevent hostilities, for they had no wish to see Russia further exalted, by fresh victories, over its eastern neighbour. But the divan continued undetermined and wavering between the different impressions it received. The people of Constantinople called loudly for war; and the Porte could not easily prevail on itself to pardon Russia for her successes and her invasions, which made it remember the many defeats it had suffered, and the humiliating peace it had been forced to sign. It was not to be expected that the Turkish ministers could calmly behold the Russian supremacy on the Euxine, the flag of that empire displayed even under the walls of Constantinople, and its commerce extending from sea to sea. The independence of the Crimea, also, was a subject of annoyance; but its probable subjugation by the Russians exceeded their patience. Some other differences had arisen between the ministers of Catherine and the Ottoman Porte. By the recent treaty of peace, the Russians had obtained several privileges for the Greek Christians, who were dispersed in great numbers throughout the Turkish provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia. Since that period many inhabitants of the opposite shore of the Danube, who professed the Greek religion, abandoned their country, and passed over into those localities in which they exchanged toleration for protection. These persons were naturally more attached to the power to which they were indebted for the new advantages they enjoyed, than to that by which they had been so long oppressed. But Russia aimed at more than this. She was secretly contriving to render these provinces entirely independent of the Porte; and to accomplish that object, she insisted that the princes or hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia should not be liable to be deposed on any pretence whatever. This interference the Turks regarded as not more justifiable than that with respect to the Crimea; but the good offices of the French ambassador prevailed over the desire for war. He induced the divan to release several Russian vessels which had been detained for more than a year in the Turkish harbours. This courtesy led to the expression of a less hostile feeling; and, in the March of 1779, a new treaty was signed



through his mediation. By this the Russians gave up some of their unjust claims with respect to Moldavia and Wallachia, and agreed to withdraw their troops from the Crimea, the independence of which, however, was again acknowledged. The Porte likewise granted its subjects who professed the Greek religion the privileges they desired, and enlarged the liberty already granted to the Russians, of navigating the Ottoman seas. With this treaty Catherine was so satisfied, that she sent magnificent presents both to her minister at Constantinople, to the French ambassador, the grand-vizier, and the principal members of the divan.

The French ambassador, while thus serving the interests of Turkey and propitiating the favour of Russia, had also laboured to deprive England of the support it derived from Russia. This attempt met with some success, and the close alliance that had so long subsisted between the courts of London and St. Petersburg was much weakened. Catherine, free to navigate so many seas, and the dominatrix of some, could not endure that any other power should pretend to a right of mastery in them. One of the causes, therefore, that contributed to raise a coldness on her part towards this country, was the jealousy she experienced at its attempt to force from every power an acknowledgment of the superiority of the British flag. Still the commerce with England was too advantageous to be discountenanced. Catherine looked on with secret satisfaction while the English were losing a part of their colonies, and with an oppressive civility she invited them to come and fetch from her ports the productions they could no longer obtain from the continent of America. At the same time she welcomed the vessels of the new-born republic, and, in opposition to the solicitations of the British minister, granted to them the free navigation of the Baltic.

Catherine had by degrees polished the rough soldier-like court by which she had been at first surrounded, until its splendour surpassed that of any neighbouring potentate. Indeed, it united the profusion of Asiatic pomp with the ingenious invention of European luxury. On court-days the quantity of jewels worn by both sexes, and

the brilliant colours of the varied costumes to be seen there, produced a remarkable effect. On these occasions both ladies and gentlemen were, with the exception of the military, dressed according to the prevailing modes at Paris. To a foreigner nothing was more remarkable than the number of diamonds and precious stones, worn as much by men as by women, who appeared to have challenged one another which should be most covered by these costly ornaments. As to the nobility, their buttons, buckles, the scabbards of their swords, and even their epaulets often consisted of diamonds, in addition to which many even wore a triple row of precious stones round the borders of their hats. When, on days distinguished by a more than ordinary amount of ceremony, the empress dined in public, she usually wore a diamond crown of immense value, the ribbons of St. Andrew and of St. George, both over one shoulder, with the collars of St. Alexander Nevski, St. Catherine,\* and St. Vladimir, and two stars, one above the other, on her bosom. This imparted to her a very brilliant appearance, and, as her courtiers were equally fond of display, the result presented was exceedingly gorgeous. During the winter the empress gave masquerades at the palace, to which persons of all ranks were invited. Sometimes the number of tickets issued amounted to 8,000: yet inconvenient crowding seldom existed; as twenty magnificent halls, splendidly illuminated, afforded sufficient room for this multitude. One of these spacious apartments contained an enclosure more adorned than the rest, and appropriated to the nobility and the most favoured courtiers. At these entertainments Catherine usually made her appearance about seven in the evening, and retired at eleven.

The Servian officer, Zoritch, had filled the post of favourite about a twelvemonth, when suddenly he received the usual orders to travel. He immediately went and complained to Potemkin, who supported him, with the object of excluding any more able and dangerous man from a position which necessarily carried with it a certain amount of influence over the empress. Potemkin ventured to ask her for what reason she had discarded her humble friend. "I was fond

\* Instituted, our readers will remember, by Peter the Great, in honour of the assistance he received from his consort in the camp on the banks of the Pruth. This distinction is bestowed upon ladies only, and consists of a narrow red ribbon, edged with

silver, to which the figure of the *saint* (?) is suspended, set with diamonds and a silver star of eight points, on the left breast, with the inscription, "*Amore et fideitate.*" The empress was the grand-mistress of the order.



of him yesterday, and to-day I am not," replied Catherine; "perhaps, if he were somewhat more informed, I might love him still; but his ignorance puts me to the blush. He can speak no other language than Russ. Let him travel into France and England to learn foreign languages."

Prince Potemkin was not long in ascertaining the cause of the dismissal of Zoritch. That evening, at the Hermitage, he perceived with astonishment, behind the chair of Catherine, a chamberlain of whom he had no knowledge. It was the new favourite Rimski Korzakoff, who, though afterwards distinguished as an able general, had been suddenly raised from the humble rank of a sergeant of the guards to that of aide-de-camp of the empress. Korzakoff had a handsome face and an elegant figure; but if the ignorance of Zoritch had disgusted Catherine, she was not likely long to remain satisfied with her new lover. His want of that common information which most men

moving in good society possess, is amusingly evident in the following incident. He conceived the idea that a man who occupied the distinguished position to which he had been advanced, ought necessarily to provide himself with a library. Sending, therefore, for the principal bookseller of St. Petersburg, he said that he wanted a great number of books to put up in a house of which the empress had just made him a present. "What books would he please to have?" was the natural inquiry of the dealer in these dumb, yet eloquent productions; not at first comprehending that they were ordered only like tables and chairs, as articles of furniture. "You understand that better than I," replied the favourite; "that is your business. You know the proper assortments; I have destined a large room to receive them. Let there be large books at the bottom, and smaller and smaller up to the top; that is the way they stand in the empress's library."\* The bookseller bowed, and retired.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ARMED NEUTRALITY; LANSKOI; POTEMKIN'S DESIGNS ON CONSTANTINOPLE; MEETING OF CATHERINE AND JOSEPH II.; STATUE OF PETER THE GREAT; RETURN OF THE PRINCESS DASCHKAW TO ST. PETERSBURG; CATHERINE MAKES HER DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES; CATHERINE AND THE EMPEROR JOSEPH AVOW THEIR INTENTION OF SUPPORTING EACH OTHER'S CLAIM UPON TURKEY; ANNEXATION OF THE CRIMEA TO RUSSIA; DEATH OF COUNT PANIN AND PRINCE GREGORY ORLOFF; RELIGIOUS TOLERATION; GRAND PROGRESS OF CATHERINE TO THE CRIMEA; ANECDOTES OF THE EMPRESS.

THE war in which America wrung her independence from England, produced a considerable agitation throughout the south of Europe; and England, France, Spain, and Holland were continually sending forth their armaments to decide whether America should become a free republic, or remain a mere colony of Great Britain. This war necessarily gave an impetus to the commerce of the north, which supplies the bulk of the commodities required for the construction

of naval armaments, as well as the stores of corn for the sustenance of the trading and manufacturing nations. The Dutch, who then possessed a great part of the commerce of the Baltic, endeavoured to save the vessels they employed in it from the English cruisers by navigating them under the neutral flag of Denmark. Nevertheless, their ships were frequently captured by our privateers, and carried into the ports of London or Plymouth. The vessels of Hamburg, Bremen,

\* "But how did you contrive to find a sufficient quantity of the large books for the bottom rank, since folios are now so much out of fashion?" said a person who happened to call at the bookseller's shop while his counters and floors were loaded with the books just come from the binders for executing this curious order. "Oh, I went to my warehouse, and brought out a number of old German commentators on the Bible, and writers on jurisprudence, where they had lain in quires ever since they were sent to

my predecessor for a bad debt of a bankrupt bookseller at Leipsic. There they are. See how gay they look in their new coats. I have only taken care to put up a set of Voltaire, of Rousseau, of Buffon, and other fashionable French authors, in conspicuous parts of the library, to be at hand in case some inquisitive reader should ask for them; and as for the rest, their elegant outsides, as is common in the world, must be a passport for any deficiency within."



and Lübeck often met with a similar fate. The merchants of those towns, therefore, implored the protection of the empress, and were fortunate enough to secure her attention.

Catherine desired to extend the maritime trade of her own people, and her pride was hurt in consequence of the little respect the English paid to ships freighted in her ports, and sometimes even to those which sailed under her flag. Instigated also by France, and solicited to that effect by the ministers of Denmark and Sweden, she adopted the plan of an armed neutrality; and, in the July of 1780, a treaty to that effect was signed by the powers we have mentioned. The principal claims of the confederate powers were thus specified:—1. That all neutral vessels may freely navigate from one port to another on the coasts of the nations at war. 2. That the effects of the belligerent powers shall be safe in all neutral vessels, with the exception of prohibited mercantile goods. 3. That the empress understands, by prohibited mercantile goods, such as are specified in the Articles 10 and 11 of her treaty of commerce with Great Britain, extending her obligation in that respect to the other powers at war. 4. That by a blockaded port, is to be understood only a port so strictly watched by the ships of the powers which attack it, that to enter it would be dangerous. 5. That these principles should be admitted as the sole rule whereby to decide the legality of prizes.—The empress added, that, to enforce the observance of these articles, to protect the honour of her flag, the security of her commerce, and the navigation of her subjects, she was about to arm the greater part of her naval forces; but that this measure should not in anywise injure the neutrality which she intended to observe as long as she was not provoked to exceed the bounds of a just moderation and the most perfect impartiality.

Prussia, Austria, and even Portugal concurred with the other neutral states; and thus a great power was seen dictating a new code of maritime laws to mankind, essentially different from those which for several hundred years had been established among commercial nations, and tending directly to the overthrow of that sovereignty or pre-eminence on the ocean, which had been so long claimed and maintained by Great Britain. The English minister at St. Petersburg exerted himself in vain to break the league of the neutral powers; his expostula-

tions were disregarded; and, for a short time, the friendly alliance between this country and Russia was jeopardised.

The able Prince Potemkin acquired almost absolute power at the Russian court. His riches were immense, the dignities he enjoyed were numerous; and the court, the army, and the navy were all submissive to him. Marshal Romantsoff alone would not humble himself before the haughty minister—a circumstance for which the latter revenged himself on the Countess Bruce, the sister of Romantsoff, by encouraging a fancy she had taken to Korzakoff, the favourite of the empress, and involving her in an intrigue with that person. Catherine's pride was hurt at the inconstancy of the presumed lover, on whom, as usual, she had showered presents of the most extravagant nature. She dismissed Korzakoff, and commanded the countess to retire to Moscow. Though now at an age when, in most persons, the sexual passions are "humble, and wait upon the judgment,"\* yet the amorous empress was unable, even for a brief period, to dispense with the society of a favourite.

The very day that she discarded Korzakoff, Catherine fixed her choice on Lanskoï, one of the chevalier guards—a youth of delicate and almost womanly features, and of a remarkably graceful figure. This person afterwards acquired the distinction—if so it can be called—of being the one of the empress's favourites to whom she was most attached.

Catherine's ambition had long caused her to turn her eyes to the east; but to Prince Potemkin, whose views with respect to conquest in this direction coincided with those of his imperial mistress, is attributed the bold idea of causing Catherine to be crowned in "the queen of cities," the capital of the Ottoman empire! Catherine acquiesced in this extravagant idea, which, if practicable, could only be accomplished by a long and sanguinary war; but Potemkin was more desirous than herself to carry it into execution. As a preliminary he proposed taking possession of the Crimea, to which, as a measure almost ripe for execution, the empress at once consented.

Before entering on this project, Catherine felt the necessity of securing the goodwill of her most powerful neighbours. Desirous of an interview with the emperor Joseph II., she requested him to join her in Poland; and on the 30th of May these two illustrious potentates met at Mohilef.

\* Catherine was in her fifty-first year.



Catherine was surrounded by a most gorgeous court; but the German emperor, who travelled under the title of the Count Von Falkenstein, affected a whimsical simplicity in dress and manner, and begged his imperial friend to spare him the necessity of all vain etiquette and constraining ceremony. In the private conversations which ensued between them, they agreed to unite in an attack on the Ottomans—to share a part of the spoils between them, to drive the Turks out of Europe, and to re-establish the ancient republic of Greece. Catherine, also, forgetful of her ally Frederic, engaged to support the emperor against all opposition on the part of the king of Prussia and the other princes of the German empire. These stipulations were afterwards confirmed by a treaty, signed at St. Petersburg, which capital Joseph accepted an invitation to visit. During his brief sojourn there, it is said that he was equally astonished at that mixture of refinement and barbarism which the Russian nation presented to his view, and the varied and seemingly contradictory disposition of the empress. He could not conceive how a woman, who seemed formed by nature for leading the whole world in chains, could submit to be governed by two favourites at her own court.

The year 1782 is in some respect memorable at St. Petersburg, in consequence of the inauguration of the famous statue of Peter the Great, executed by Stephen Falconet, who came from Paris for that purpose, and was engaged for nine years in the production of this colossal work of art. Falconet proposed that the pedestal of the statue should consist of a huge and rugged rock, to indicate symbolically to posterity the barren point from which the heroic reformer started, and the tremendous obstacles he surmounted. Catherine was pleased with the idea; and, after considerable search, a rock was found, partly sunk in a vast morass, in a village near the shore of the Gulf of Finland. The weight of this enormous stone was estimated at 3,200,000 pounds, and it lay at the distance of eleven versts, or about 41,250 English feet from the spot where the monument was to be erected. During its passage, it had to be carried over heights, across rivers, morasses, and swampy places; then down the river Neva, and finally to be disembarked, and drawn by land to the place of its destination. The serious difficulty of moving such

a mass was sufficient to deter many persons from the attempt; but Catherine delighted to triumph over difficulties; and although nearly four months elapsed before the stone was raised from the earth, the concentration of industry, and the utter disregard of expense in the erection of mechanical appliances, enabled the labourers to accomplish their task. It was noticed as a remarkable circumstance, that neither in the morass, or for some distance around it, was another stone to be found, or any other kind of substance, analogous to this stupendous rock. Another circumstance respecting it struck the beholders with astonishment. One side of it had been struck and damaged by lightning. On knocking off the shattered fragment, a collection of many kinds of precious stones was discovered; crystals, agates, topazes, cornelians, and amethysts, presented to the eyes of the curious a sight not less unexpected than magnificent, and, to the naturalists, an object of interesting investigation.\*

The statue, of which this rock formed the base, was generally considered as a masterpiece of art. The features are regarded as being an admirable likeness of the illustrious original. The artist has represented the hero on horseback, in the act of suddenly arresting the impetuous career of his steed, on the overhanging verge of a steep precipice which he has ascended. The czar is attired in the Asiatic dress which he discarded and condemned—an erroneous conception, we think, of the sculptor. The head of the statue is appropriately crowned with laurels, and the right arm is extended with dignity, while the left grasps the bridle of the horse, whose beauty of form and elegant attitude commands the admiration of most spectators. The fiery courser is represented as trampling on a serpent, which writhes with anguish beneath its feet; a type of the fate of those who, from motives of malignity, opposed the will of the iron-handed and imperious Peter. The statue is gigantic; the figure of the monarch being eleven feet in height, and that of the horse seventeen feet. The expense of this monument was truly imperial, amounting to 424,610 roubles, of which no less than 70,000 were expended on the

\* Thousands of these gems, as well as other parts of the stone, were cut and polished into bracelets, rings, necklaces, snuff-boxes, heads of canes, &c.; and found a very rapid sale, not only among people of fashion, but throughout the empire.



transport of the rock from the morass near the village of Lachta to St. Petersburg. Still, a work which so prominently challenges attention, has necessarily elicited much criticism; and a recent French traveller observes, that it is neither antique nor modern, but a Roman of the time of Louis XV. On the 7th of August, the ceremony of the disclosure of the statue to the public took place; and the empress, making her appearance in the balcony of the senate-house, solemnised the event by the distribution of gold and silver medals. She also issued an ukase, terminating every process of more than ten years' standing, discharging all debtors who had suffered a five years' captivity, and remitting all debts to the crown below the sum of 500 roubles.

During this summer, the Princess Daschkaw returned to St. Petersburg from her travels in Germany, Italy, France, and England. She was welcomed and again received into favour by the empress, who appears to have missed her vivacious society and the assistance of her strong intellect. Catherine treated her with great kindness, advanced her son in the army, and bestowed upon the princess an estate having on it about 2,500 peasants. The empress shortly afterwards expressed the eccentric desire of appointing the princess directress of the Academy of Arts and Sciences!

That lady declined the unexpected honour, and then said jestingly—"Appoint me directress of your majesty's washerwomen, and you shall see with what zeal I am capable of serving you." Catherine persisted; and the princess, on her return home, wrote a serious letter of expostulation to the empress on the subject. "I told her," says the princess, "without reserve, that the private life of a sovereign might pass unnoticed in the pages of history; but that an injudicious and hurtful nomination to a public office never would; that nature herself, in making me a woman, had disqualified me for the direction of an academy of science; and that feeling as I did my own literary insufficiency, I had never sought the distinction of being admitted into any learned society whatever, not even

when the opportunity offered at Rome of purchasing it for a few ducats."

The princess requested Potemkin to deliver this communication to the empress; but, to her astonishment, he tore it in pieces. Then, to an angry inquiry as to the cause of his conduct, he replied—"Be composed, princess, and hearken to me. You are sincerely attached to her majesty; nobody doubts it; why will you, then, distress and grieve her on a subject which, for the last two days, has occupied her thoughts exclusively, and on which she has absolutely fixed her heart? If you are really inexorable, here is pen, ink, and paper; write your letter anew; but believe me, in expostulating thus, I am only acting the part of a man devoted to your interest. I ought, besides, to add, that in urging your acceptance of the place proposed, her majesty has the further object in view of securing your residence in St. Petersburg, and of making it the occasion of a more frequent and more immediate intercourse between you; for, to say the truth, she is worn out with the society of those fools by whom she is eternally encircled." The princess therefore consented, according to her own account very unwillingly, to the desire of the empress, who was really serious in this strange appointment. Setting aside the accidental circumstance of the sex of the princess, which certainly must, in such a matter, be regarded as a disqualification, she seems to have made an active and very excellent directress. She put an end to much of that speculation which is the worm that eats into the heart of most Russian institutions; relieved it by good management from pecuniary difficulties; increased the number of students; and established three new courses of lectures in mathematics, geometry, and natural history, which were delivered in the Russian language by a native professor, gratuitously to all who chose to attend them. The following year the princess was also appointed to preside over a new academy, of a purely national character, founded by the empress for the purpose of perfecting the Russian language, and the advancement of its literature.\* In connection with it, she conducted the com-

\* The inaugural discourse delivered by the princess on this occasion will, we fancy, be perused with interest, from motives which may vary according to the sex or taste of the reader. The learned lady spoke or read as follows:—"Gentlemen,—A new instance of the solicitude of our august empress for the instruction of her subjects has this day assembled

us together. That genius which has already diffused so many benefits over Russia has now given a proof of its protective energy in behalf of the Russian language, the parent and source of so many others. You will surely appreciate, gentlemen, the gift which our great sovereign has conferred on our country and on this assembly. The riches and



pilation of a dictionary of the Russian language, the first that had been accomplished. It was, however, subjected to much adverse criticism; and it did not satisfy the expectations of the empress, on account of its being arranged, not in an alphabetical, but in an etymological order.

Towards the close of the year 1782, the emperor of Germany laid aside the mask, and avowed his intention of supporting both his own claims and those of Russia against the Turkish empire. At the same time the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg issued memorials, in which they peremptorily insisted that the Porte should not in future, under any pretence, interfere in the affairs of the Tartars; that the privileges of the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia should not be infringed, nor the free navigation of the Euxine and the Archipelago in any way be obstructed. The consequences of a failure with respect to these demands could not be more fully explained than they already were, by the appearance of large Russian and Austrian armies on the frontiers, and the vast preparations for war made by both those em-

pires. The Porte, though it acted with dignity, yet felt it necessary to submit. The following year, Catherine poured her troops into the Crimea, where, after many intrigues, the khan was deposed, and the principal Tartars compelled to take an oath of allegiance to the empress. Turkey, though extremely irritated, was not in a condition to prevent this annexation, which Catherine justified in a manifesto addressed to the crowned heads of Europe. It is fashionable to denounce the aggressive policy of Russia; but we think there is no necessity for any indignant declamation in this case. Geographically, the Crimea must be regarded as a portion of the Russian empire, to which it naturally belongs. It is utterly dis severed from the Turkish dominions; and for the sultan to exercise a paramount and protecting power over it, must have been an indignity and a cause of uneasiness to Russia. As to the Tartars themselves, they deserved no consideration whatever: they had obtained the Crimea by conquest, and, during the time of their power, had ever been restless, marauding, vindictive, and bloodthirsty neighbours.

copiousness of our language are well known to you. They are such as will render justice to the varied treasures of antiquity. Transposed into our tongue, the nervous eloquence of Cicero, the measured grandeur of Virgil, the attractive sweetness of Demosthenes, the easy eloquence of Ovid, and the thundering flashes of the lyre of Pindar, will lose nothing of their respective beauties. Our mother-tongue unites not only these advantages, gentlemen, but even in all the subtleties of philosophy, in their affinities and oppositions, it furnishes appropriate expressions, and terms the most applicable and descriptive. But with such resources, we have to lament the want of determinate rules; rules for the inflections of words, as well as an authorised definition and limitation of their meaning. Hence have arisen those varieties of construction, those improprieties of imitation and foreign idiom, which have hitherto disfigured and depressed our language. The object of the Imperial Russian Academy is to render it perfect, to raise it to a standard of elevation suitable to the glorious age of Catherine II. This, gentlemen, must be the end and aim of the labours of a society founded and supported by her gracious protection. The different memorials of antiquity spread over the vast surface of the Russian empire, our numerous chronicles, those precious records of the great actions of our ancestors, of which few of the nations of Europe now existing can boast an equal number, present a vast field for our exertions, upon which we are led to advance under the guidance of the enlightened genius of our august protectress. The high deeds of our princes, the exploits of the past and the present ever-memorable age, present an almost boundless range of subjects worthy of our labour. But, gentlemen, the first fruits of our endeavours, the first offering to be laid at the feet of our immortal

sovereign, is a grammar of our language, exact and methodical, and a rich and copious dictionary. Allow me to flatter myself, gentlemen, that you will not hesitate to give me credit for the sentiments with which I am penetrated in the honour of being associated with you by my generous sovereign, to concur in the good of an establishment so useful to our country. Believe me, gentlemen, that the zeal which enkindles in my heart the love of that country will never be extinguished, and that in everything which may tend to render our society flourishing and successful, I shall endeavour to supply, by indefatigable application, the deficiency of other qualifications of which I am most sensible. I deem it an indispensable duty, on this first occasion of our meeting, to place before you a sketch which I have had the honour of submitting to the consideration of her majesty, in order that it may have the benefit of your remarks, and the addition of whatever may be considered further necessary to establish the basis of our constitution. Any imperfections which here present themselves will not surely escape your penetration; but there are two considerations which solicit your indulgence. The first is, that I have contracted the habit of exposing to our incomparable sovereign my ideas, however undigested and unarranged they may be, with entire confidence and sincerity, which she is pleased to receive with kindness, from a persuasion of the purity of my intentions. The other, that it never entered my contemplation (and I trust such a vain idea never can), that I, though placed at the head of this academy, should be capable, in my own person, of upholding the labours and glory of such an institution. It is on your aid, gentlemen, that I count; and the confidence which I place in it, is the strongest proof I can give of my profound esteem for you."



They were, indeed, little better than a nation of robbers, whose independence was not consistent with the safety of peaceable people. Russia did wisely in annexing the Crimea, and governing her turbulent people by the sword: under such circumstances England would have acted in the same manner.

The empress assured the Tartars that they should be placed on an equality with the ancient subjects of Russia; that they should enjoy the most absolute liberty of conscience, with the full exercise of their public worship and religious ceremonies. She also exhorted them to imitate the submission and zeal of the rest of her people. The Tartars were not affected by these exhortations, and resolved to free themselves from the yoke just imposed upon them. Prince Potemkin, informed of their design, gave orders to General Prozoroffski to seize on the principal persons concerned, and put them instantly to death. That officer recoiled from a charge which he regarded as inconsistent with the honourable duties of a military man, and replied, that he was not calculated for an assassin. General Paul Potemkin, cousin to the minister, was less scrupulous; and under his directions no less than 30,000 Tartars, of both sexes, were massacred in cold blood. Such terrible incidents are, we fear, ever the inseparable attendants of conquest, even in humane times.

While Russia was engaged in this work of annexation, she preserved an attitude so formidable that Turkey despaired of being able to encounter her in arms with any hope of success. An army of 70,000 men, under the orders of General Potemkin, was assembled on the frontiers of the Crimea. These Prince Repnin was ready to support with another army of 40,000 men; while Marshal Romantsoff, with a third army, held his general quarters at Kief. The squadrons of the Euxine were armed; and ten sail-of-the-line, with several frigates, were only waiting the signal for proceeding from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Under these circumstances France had no great difficulty in inducing Turkey to negotiate, rather than fight, with Russia. On the 9th of January, 1784, a new treaty, between the empress and the sultan, was signed at Constantinople, by which the entire sovereignty of the Crimea, of the Isle of Taman, and a great part of the Kuban, was ceded to Russia. To these places the empress restored their ancient names: the Crimea was called the Taurica, and the

Kuban the Caucasus—titles which never fail to remind us of the fables of ancient Greece; Iphigenia in Tauris; the race-ground of Achilles; the cities Pantikapæum, Bosphorus, and Tanais; of the chained Prometheus; and of the tribes of Caucasus and Circassia, still famous for the beauty of their women.

Before Catherine obtained this accession of territory, she had lost two of the principal chiefs of the conspiracy that had placed her on the throne. Count Panin and Prince Gregory Orloff died within a very short time of each other; the first at St. Petersburg, the other at Moscow. Panin, supplanted by Prince Potemkin, had fallen a prey to grief and vexation, and died on the 31st of March, 1783: he left behind him the character of an honest and generous man, though he certainly did not always merit the first of these epithets. The close of the life of Gregory Orloff was in gloomy accordance with that poetical justice of which we hear more than we see. Though in the possession of an immense fortune, and married to a young and handsome wife, he was rendered miserable by the knowledge that the smiles of the empress were lavished upon younger favourites. During the latter part of his life he travelled almost incessantly, and a despondency into which he had fallen was increased to a profound melancholy by the loss of his wife, at Lausanne, in 1782. He returned to St. Petersburg, in the hope of recovering his serenity by mixing in the scenes of his past pleasures. The court itself afforded him no relief, and he soon startled his friends by conduct which indicated a disordered intellect. He would sometimes give himself up to an extravagant gaiety, and then as suddenly burst out into reproaches against the empress. After a time he retired to Moscow, where he became the victim of a consuming remorse. He was incessantly haunted by a vision of the murdered Peter III.; and, in the month of April, 1783, he expired in the agonies of despair.

The empress had long lost her affection for Orloff; but she was deeply moved in the following year by the loss of her favourite Lanskoï. To him Catherine was so greatly attached, that she addressed herself, personally, to remove the defects of his education, and that with so much success, that he soon became as distinguishable for his acquirements and the elegance of his manners, as he was already by the graces of his person.



Whether her love for Lansköi would have been more enduring than that which she entertained for her previous favourites, it is difficult to say, as he was attacked with a violent fever, and perished in the flower of his age, in the arms of his imperial mistress, who lavished upon him, to the very last moment, all the tenderness the most passionate affection could inspire. After his death Catherine abandoned herself to the most poignant sorrow. For some days she refused all food, and remained three months within the walls of her palace. She afterwards erected a superb mausoleum to his memory in the gardens of the palace of Tzarsko-selo. Two years afterwards, while walking accidentally near this monument, she burst into tears on beholding it.

Many persons at court were ambitious of filling the post left vacant by the death of Lansköi; and the Princess Daschkaw has the reputation of endeavouring to obtain it for her son. This she denies. Certain it is that the young Prince Daschkaw, though possessed of a face and a figure calculated to make an impression on the heart of the susceptible empress, was not successful. Catherine at length selected a lieutenant of the name of Yermoloff, on whom to confer her favours.

It has been observed that the spirit of toleration which prevailed during the reign of the empress was a remarkable feature in a despotic government. Throughout her long reign she never permitted any person to suffer punishment on account of his religious opinions. She could not be induced to visit those denounced as heretics with the signs of her displeasure. "Poor wretches," said she once, with a meaning smile, "since we know that they are to suffer so much and so long in the world to come, it is but reasonable that we should endeavour, by all means, to make their situation here as comfortable to them as we can." A writer on this subject aptly remarks—"The intolerant of more polished nations might go to the provinces of Esthonia, Livonia, Finland, and Russia, to take lessons of moderation and Christian forbearance. But at St. Petersburg, the general and peculiar feature in the public character is toleration—a virtue which, in some sense, has long since taken root in the nation at large; but, from the confluence of such numbers of people of various persuasions and the most diversified systems of faith, has acquired so general and extensive a sway, that certainly it is not easy to find a

spot of earth upon the globe, where, in this respect, a man may more quietly pass his days than at St. Petersburg. It is to be understood, moreover, that the word 'toleration' is not here confined to that narrow meaning in which it is usually taken, in speaking of an extorted and commanded forbearance in matters of religion, or of the permission for the weaker party to exist by a stated law. The idea here connected with the term includes a voluntarily and universally-diffused forbearance, in every place, and towards every person, his manner of thinking and acting. It therefore comprehends not only religion, but also political and social toleration; and is remarkable, not as the characteristic of the form of government, but as entirely that of the public."

The liberality of Catherine was displayed by the sanction of a seminary of Jesuits\* at Mohilef, and by the protection of Mohammedanism in the Crimea. Indeed, almost every year she exhibited to her people some remarkable instance of the protection she granted to the liberty of worship. On the day of the benediction of the waters of the Neva, her confessor, at her orders, invited to his house the ecclesiastics of all communions, and gave them a grand entertainment, which the empress called the "Dinner of Toleration." It was commonly attended by the priests of no less than eight different forms of religion; and at the conclusion of the repast, the metropolitan usually said, with a loud voice, either in Russ or Latin, "Glory to God in the highest!—On earth peace!—Good-will towards men!"

It was not in religion alone that the empress displayed an active liberality. Her labours for the diffusion of instruction amongst her people were unremitting. She had already opened many schools in the large towns; but she now resolved to spread these benefits to the future men and women of Russia, as far as practicable, throughout the empire. With this object she opened a commission of public instruction, for the institution of normal schools, which were established on the same principle as those then existing in Austria. Catherine took much interest in her schools, and gave herself a great deal of trouble about them. Occasionally she visited them herself during

\* However, to guard against the danger commonly apprehended from this order of monks, they were not permitted to leave the two or three towns which had been assigned to them as places of residence.



the hours of instruction. It was, indeed, a pleasing trait in the character of the empress, that she was always fond of children, and frequently bestowed great care upon them. She generally had a number of them in her apartments, where they enjoyed the same liberty with her grandchildren, and she returned their caresses with extreme kindness.

Catherine's favourite, Yermoloff, contrived to make himself obnoxious to Prince Potemkin, to whom he is said to have behaved with ingratitude. The irritable minister at length said to the empress—"Madam, there is but one alternative; you must either dismiss Yermoloff or me; for so long as you keep that white negro,\* I shall not set my foot within the palace." The empress yielded; Yermoloff was dismissed, and a new favourite of the name of Count Momonoff succeeded him.

On the 18th of January, 1787, Catherine started on a magnificent progress to Khereson and the Crimea. So extensive were the preparations that had been made for this journey, that it was reported the Cleopatra of the North intended to be crowned queen of Taurida, and to be declared protectress of all the nations of Tartars. Catherine had an important political object in this intended display of magnificence and power. She proposed, after having taken the sceptre of the Crimea, and awed the surrounding nations into submission, to conduct her grandson Constantine to the gates of that Oriental empire over which she had designed him to rule. So fixed was this idea in the mind of the empress, that Constantine, from his birth, was placed in the hands of Greek nurses, dressed in the Greek costume, and surrounded by the children of that nation, that he might acquire their language, which he soon spoke with great facility.

The illness of the young prince, which compelled the empress to leave him at St. Petersburg, together with some other circumstances, induced Catherine to abandon the idea of the coronation, the assumption of new titles, and to dispense with the large military force which it was intended should accompany her. Yet, to give dignity to the occasion, Catherine had induced the emperor, Joseph II., to consent to meet and confer with her at Khereson. Stanislaus, the poor shadow-king of Poland, the

last of the monarchs of that divided country, also swelled the triumph of the autocratix by joining this distinguished party. The Porte took the alarm; and a storm was gathering throughout the Ottoman empire, to burst forth at no distant period. Catherine, however, either despised, or affected to despise, the effeminacy and the ignorance of the Mussulmans, and the dull life of their sultans, whose horizon did not extend beyond the walls of their harem. "These imbecile despots," said she, "weakened by the pleasures of the seraglio, ruled over by their ulemahs, and captives to their Janizaries, can neither think, speak, fight, nor administer public affairs; their infancy is perpetual."

The empress started on her journey in the depth of winter, attended by a brilliant suite, and a cavalcade composed of fourteen carriages and 184 sledges. "The cold," said Count Ségur,† who, in his capacity of ambassador from France, accompanied the empress, "rose to seventeen degrees; the road was excellent, and our carriages, mounted on a sort of lofty skates, were drawn along with such rapidity, that they seemed to fly through the air. To protect us from the cold, we were wrapped up in furs of bear-skin, which we wore over pelisses finer and more valuable, and we had on our heads caps of sable. With these precautions we did not feel the cold, even when it rose to twenty or twenty-five degrees. In the houses where we lodged, the stoves gave us reason to fear an excess of heat rather than of cold. At this time of the year, when the days were shortest, the sun did not give us light till very late, and, at the end of six or seven hours, he disappeared, and the darkest night succeeded. But in the midst of this darkness we were not left in want of light. At short distances from each other, and on both sides of the road, enormous piles of fir, cypress, birch, and pine had been raised, which were set on fire, so that we posted through a range of fires more brilliant than the rays of daylight. It was thus that the proud empress of the North, in the midst of the deepest night, willed and commanded that there should be light."

Away went the imperial *cortège*, with an almost incredible celerity, over vast plains covered with snow, across frozen marshes, and through forests of fir, whose dark branches, hung with innumerable icicles, sometimes irradiated by the faint gleams of

\* Potemkin called Yermoloff by that name, because he was thick-lipped and extremely fair.

† *Memoirs and Recollections.*



a winter's sun, bore a brief resemblance to the lustre of the crystal and the diamond. For some little distance beyond the towns and villages, the road was thronged by citizens and rustics, whose curiosity led them to brave the severity of the cold, and venture forth to salute their sovereign with acclamations.

Count Ségur relates the following anecdote of the empress, which occurred during the journey; and though not in itself of any great moment, may contribute something towards enabling us to take a just view of her character. "One day," he observes, "as I was sitting opposite to her in her carriage, she expressed a desire that I would repeat to her some little pieces of poetry which I had composed. The delightful familiarity which she permitted to those who travelled with her, the presence of her young favourite, the remembrance of those who had preceded him in her favour, her philosophy, her gaiety, her correspondence with the Prince De Ligne, Voltaire, and Diderot, having led me to suppose that she would not be shocked at a tale of gallantry, I recited one to her which was, in truth, a little free and gay, but still sufficiently choice in its expressions to have been well received at Paris by the Duc de Nivernais, by the Prince de Beauvais, and by ladies whose virtue equalled their good-humour. To my great surprise, I saw the laughing traveller suddenly assume the deportment of a majestic sovereign. She interrupted me by a question altogether foreign to the purpose, and changed the subject of conversation. Some minutes afterwards, in order to show that I understood her lesson, I entreated her attention to a piece of verse of a very different kind from the former, and to which she lent the most obliging attention. As if desirous that her weaknesses should be respected, she took care to cover them with a veil of decency and dignity. This anecdote reminds me of what my brother said, with so much justness and originality, when speaking of the indulgence permitted by women thoroughly virtuous, and the apparent severity of those who are not quite so perfect. 'Where virtue reigns,' said he, 'the show of nice decorum is useless.'"

After six days' travelling the empress became fatigued, and remained for three more at the picturesque city of Smolensk. On the second evening there she gave a grand ball, at which 300 ladies, splendidly attired,

evidenced the progress which the provinces of the empire had made in imitating the luxuries, the fashions, and the elegance of the capital. The journey was renewed, and ten days' more travelling brought the imperial party to Kief, the ancient capital of the first princes of Russia, situated upon the bank of the river Dnieper. Here Catherine was compelled to remain until the 1st of May. Still, in this ghost of a once great city she kept a numerous and certainly remarkable court. Around her were to be seen warlike princes from many nations; the nobles and beauties of Poland, who, forgetful of the wounds of their country, had flocked there to meet the proud autocratrix whose sword hung suspended over it; officers of all the imperial armies, including those of the Don Cossacks, richly clothed in the Asiatic costume; Tartars, Circassians, and Calmucks; together with envoys from many warlike and mostly wandering tribes, often beaten, but never subdued. "It was," said an observer, "the whole East congregated to see the modern Semiramis receiving the homage of the monarchs of the West. It was like a magic theatre, where ancient and modern times seemed to be mingled and confounded with one another, and where civilisation went hand-in-hand with barbarism."

Count Ségur, disappointed at seeing so little of the countries through which they passed, ventured to complain that it was extremely vexatious to travel so far and never to see anything but a court, never to hear anything but Greek masses, and never to attend at anything but balls. The empress, hearing of it, said to him—"I am informed that you censure me for traversing my empire, in order to give nothing but audiences and *fêtes*: but listen to my reasons. I do not travel to see the places, but to see the people; I know enough, by charts and descriptions, with regard to a matter which a rapid progress will not permit me to investigate. That which is essential to me, is to give the people the means of approaching me; to open a way for their complaints, and to make those tremble who dare to abuse my authority in the expectation that I shall not discover their errors, their negligences, or their injustice. Such, then, is the advantage which I expect to derive from my journeys; their mere announcement does good; and my motto is—*The eye of the master fattens the horse.*"

When the returning spring thawed the



waters of the ancient Borysthenes, the empress prepared to renew her journey. Before doing so, she visited the monastery of Petcherski, and distributed many favours and decorations, diamonds and pearls. "The Cleopatra of Kief," said the witty Austrian soldier, Prince de Ligne, "does not swallow pearls, but she gives many away." The galley on which she embarked was attended by a fleet of more than eighty vessels, manned by about 3,000 men. The vessels containing the empress and her immediate companions, had splendid apartments, glittering with gold and silk, constructed on the deck. Every galley carried a band of music; the warlike strains of which, added to the shouts of the spectators and the roar of cannon, assisted in producing a most imposing spectacle. The snow had thoroughly disappeared when the empress departed from Kief; the earth was covered with a rich verdure, and even, in some spots, enamelled with early flowers; above all, a brilliant sun animated, enlivened, and coloured every object. The rocks that intercepted the navigation of the river, had been partially broken down for this memorable occasion.

At Kanieff the fleet cast anchor to receive Stanislaus, the king of Poland. Catherine had not beheld her early lover for the space of three-and-twenty years, and she seemed momentarily affected at the interview; but on assembling at the dinner-table, she displayed more than her customary cheerfulness. On rising, the king took from the hands of a page the gloves and fan of the empress, and presented them to her. Catherine returned the courtesy by handing to him his hat. "Ah! madam," he remarked, in allusion to the crown of Poland, "you formerly gave me a much finer one."

At Kremenchuk the empress was lodged in a magnificent mansion, and entertained by a mock battle carried on by 12,000 men in new uniforms. This was arranged by Prince Potemkin, who showed an extraordinary ingenuity and a boundless extravagance in providing for the amusement of his imperial mistress. Every means was adopted to give an appearance of life and fertility even to the barrenness of the desert. Large flocks had been collected for the occasion, to impart animation to the meadows in the neighbourhood of the villages; groups of peasants enlivened the banks; and boats, full of youths and maidens, singing the rustic airs of their country, sometimes surrounded the galley of the empress.

Joseph II. met Catherine, on the 18th of May, near Kaydak, and from thence they proceeded by land to Kherson. "We entered," says the gossiping Count Ségur, "upon what in Russia is called the Steppes—vast and solitary meadows, altogether destitute of trees, and varied only at great intervals by hillocks quite bare, with some paltry rivulet winding at their feet. We often traversed seven or eight leagues without encountering a man, a house, or a bush. Africa has its deserts of sand; those of the East are less barren—they are the deserts of verdure. Immense flocks of sheep, and a numerous breed of horses, alone inhabit these profound solitudes, where they are left to rove about the whole of the year. At the first view, this immense and verdant horizon, where nothing checks the sight, produces on the mind the same impression as the ocean. It seems to give greater grandeur to the imagination, and greater depth to reflection; but, in proportion as you advance, the uniformity occasions weariness; you become excessively tired of continually beholding, above and around, nothing but the sky and green fields, which have no limits."

The visit of the empress to the city of Kherson, called by the Tartars "Kisikerman," or City of Daughters, was celebrated with many festivities. It was here that she beheld a gate bearing a Greek inscription, meaning, "By this the way leads to Byzantium." This incident has been magnified into the statement, that she erected a triumphal arch at this place, and, in a fit of arrogant prophecy, inscribed those words upon it. The visit of the empress to the Crimea, though necessarily displeasing to the Porte, was not conducted in open defiance of it. Long before leaving St. Petersburg, she had certified her intention to the divan at Constantinople; the messenger being directed to soften the communication by the statement, that some necessary internal regulations were the only objects of his sovereign in this visit to a part of her subjects. The Porte, however, exhibited symptoms of uneasiness, and appeared undecided as to whether they ought not to consider the visit as an aggression. They even sent four ships of war, while the empress was at Kherson, to anchor at the mouth of the Borysthenes. This proceeding so resembled a threat, that Catherine beheld the vessels with much excitement, and, turning to her courtiers, exclaimed—"Do you see! one would suppose that the



Turks had no recollection of Tschesmè!" Her indignation was the greater on finding that the Ottomans were assisted by French officers and engineers. Prince Potemkin reproached Count Ségur with this circumstance; but the latter answered, that the Russians could scarcely be astonished at precautions dictated by common prudence.\* Catherine, for some days, treated the French minister with coldness, but soon received him again into her favour.

Crossing the famous lines of Perekop, the imperial party proceeded to the city of Bachtchi-Saraï, and took up their residence in the palace of the ancient khans. The Turkish and Tartar merchants looked on with an apathetic pride. On the approach of a cavalcade they showed neither surprise nor active displeasure. Regarding their conquerors as infidels and dogs, they retained their stupid pride; and instead of imputing their reverses to ignorance, attributed them to fatality alone. The pride of the empress was natural and justifiable: it had been reserved for her—a woman—to annihilate the Tartar power in the Crimea,

and to subdue beneath the Russian sceptre a race who had formerly been the conquerors of Russia, ever delighting in ferocious excesses; and who, but a few years before their overthrow, had shown that they still retained their brutal and brigand-like spirit.

On the return of Catherine, she visited the famous battle-field of Pultawa. There a Russian army of 50,000 men was divided into two bodies, and gave a mimic representation of the conflict between Charles and Peter. During the charging of troops and the roar of cannon, Catherine felt the full excitement of the scene, and her eyes sparkled with animation and delight. On some of the courtiers pointing out to her an error committed by the Swedes, she observed—"Here we may see on what a small matter the fate of empires depends. Had it not been for this fault, we should not be here." At Moscow the emperor Joseph took leave of Catherine, and returned to his dominions; while she and her court proceeded to St. Petersburg, having traversed nearly the whole length of the empire.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

TURKEY DECLARES WAR AGAINST RUSSIA; SWEDEN DOES THE SAME; EXTRAVAGANT DEMANDS OF GUSTAVUS; CONSTERNATION AT ST. PETERSBURG; SUCCESSES OF THE RUSSIANS AND THE TURKS; CAPTURE OF OTCHAKOFF, AND MASSACRE THERE; GUSTAVUS OBTAINS A NAVAL TRIUMPH OVER THE RUSSIANS; PEACE BETWEEN SWEDEN AND RUSSIA; SUWARROW AND THE BATTLE OF THE RYMNIK; DEFEAT OF THE TURKS AT MARTINESTI; THE TAKING AND MASSACRE OF ISMAIL; ECCENTRICITY OF POTEMKIN; HE GIVES AN EXTRAVAGANT ENTERTAINMENT TO THE EMPRESS; CATHERINE'S LAST FAVOURITE; DEATH AND CHARACTER OF POTEMKIN.

TURKEY had been too bitterly wounded long to submit in silence to the humiliations it had received at the hands of its northern neighbour. The Porte demanded

the restitution of the Crimea. Fresh, though trivial, disputes arose; and on the 18th of August, 1787, the sultan, secretly instigated both by Prussia† and England,

\* Count Ségur was also so fortunate as to enjoy the confidence of the emperor Joseph, then accompanying the empress under the assumed title of the Count de Falkenstein. Notwithstanding the treaty between Austria and Russia, the count considered the emperor as but little disposed to second the ambition of Catherine. "Constantinople," said Joseph, "will ever be an object of jealousy and a ground for discord, which will always render it impossible for the great powers to agree in a division of Turkey." He appeared also very little struck with the progress of the Russian establishments. "I find," said he, "more of show than of reality. Prince Potemkin is active, but more fit to begin great works than to finish them. As to the rest, all becomes

easy if we are prodigal of wealth and of human life. We could not venture in Germany nor in France upon what is hazardous here without opposition. The master commands, and troops of slaves obediently labour. They are paid little or nothing; they are badly fed; they dare not let a murmur escape them; and I know that, during three years in these new governments, fatigue and the unhealthiness of the morasses have destroyed 50,000, without its being complained of, or even alluded to."

† Frederic the Great was no more. He died on the 17th of August, 1786, in the seventy-fifth year of his age, and the forty-seventh of his reign. To his nephew and successor (Frederic William II.) he left a kingdom enlarged from 2,190 to 3,515



declared war against Russia, and sent the ambassador of that power to the castle of the Seven Towers. M. de Bulgakoff was, however, permitted to be attended by his secretary and some servants, and an elegant pavilion was constructed to enable him to enjoy the fresh air. Shortly afterwards Sahim-Gueray, the former khan of the Crimea, was strangled at Rhodes, as a punishment for his ancient concessions to the Russians.

The Turks and the Russians were each busied with preparations for a war, which France strove in vain to prevent. England had more influence with the Porte, into whose quarrel it entered with some warmth, in consequence of the jealous feelings with which it beheld Russia form a treaty of commerce with France. The divan ordered 80,000 men to march, in order to cover Otchakoff; advanced a formidable army to the banks of the Danube, and called upon all true followers of the prophet to arm in defence of his successor. The call was readily obeyed; for the Turks were furious at the recent visit of the empress to the Crimea, covered as it was by the vicinity of an army of 150,000 men, and astonished that a progress so insulting had not been prevented. The brave old capudan-pasha, Gazi the Victorious, who had recently returned from the Archipelago, declared, that though grown gray in the service of his country, he still felt himself strong and vigorous, and that there was nothing upon earth he wished for so passionately, as to close his life with the glorious act of driving the infidels out of their fraudulent usurpations in the Crimea and on the Euxine, and of replacing the ruined nations of Tartars and other Mussulmans in their ancient possessions. He soon afterwards entered the Black Sea with a fleet of sixteen ships of the line, eight frigates, and several galleys, intent on erasing the memory of the disaster of his country at Tschesmè. The Tartars, also, on being invited to return to their former allegiance, met and elected a fresh khan, Par-Gueray, who soon beheld under his command an

army of 40,000 men. It was in vain that Catherine had loaded the Tartars with presents, and caused the Koran to be printed at St. Petersburg for their use: they beheld in her the Christian potentate; while they longed to be ruled by a true follower of the prophet.

The empress had long regarded a renewal of the war with Turkey as a probability, and had made preparations accordingly. She had already a great force in the Kuban, or Caucasus, and her armies were advancing in detachments to the Crimea. Potemkin, who longed for military distinction, assumed the command of all these forces; while Suwarrow, Kamenskoï, Korsakoff, and other generals of reputation, served under him. The famous Marshal Romantsoff, disdaining to swell the fame of Potemkin, assigned his advanced age as an excuse for holding aloof. A Russian fleet, consisting of eight ships of the line, twelve frigates, and nearly 200 gun-boats, made its appearance in the Black Sea, and two strong squadrons were in readiness at Cronstadt, to sail for the Mediterranean. Catherine also induced the emperor, Joseph II., to support her with an army of 80,000 Austrians, who proceeded to Moldavia; and not a few statesmen anticipated the approaching overthrow of the Ottoman empire. Catherine also appealed to that deep sense of superstition in her people which, in reality, she despised. She caused papers to be circulated amongst them, containing the assumed prophecies of the Russian patriarchs, Jeremiah and Nicon, in which the speedy ruin of Constantinople was affirmed. On the other side, a Tartar prophet made his appearance, and affirmed that an angel had revealed itself to him in a wood, and promised to raise against the Russians all the hordes of the Caucasus.

The Turks suffered a severe defeat before Kinburn, where no less than three actions took place. Suwarrow, who commanded, was himself wounded, but 4,000 Turks perished; Otchakoff was laid siege to, but vigorously defended: the same was the case with Choczim. But the other powers of Europe

German square miles; about 70,000,000 of dollars (£10,000,000 sterling) in the treasury, and an army of 200,000 men. Prussia had become a great power in Europe; but political errors soon lessened the new sovereign's influence with foreign cabinets; while useless wars, and the extravagance of favourites, wasted the treasure he had inherited. Tyrannical, sensual, and superstitious, Frederic William abandoned himself to the society of his mistresses, and allowed his

mind to be influenced by the mystics known as the *Illuminati*, who pretended to make Moses and Jesus appear to him; and on another occasion, during supper, called up for his satisfaction, or rather seemed to call up, the ghost of Cæsar. This foolish monarch was also so lavish in bestowing titles upon his favourites, that a satirical writer observed, that it would soon be more difficult, in Prussia, to find a *man* than a *nobleman*.



did not view the conduct of Russia without uneasiness. Turkey was secretly encouraged by France, and also by Prussia; while England was sending it supplies. This Catherine might, perhaps, have anticipated; but she had not foreseen that Gustavus III. of Sweden would have had the boldness to declare war upon her. The policy of Russia had long been to prevent Sweden from ever recovering her former rank among nations, or any part of that influence which she once held in the political scale of Europe. A nominal king without power or effect; with a nation constantly rent and distracted by jarring factions, any of which she might occasionally support against the others, as best suited her immediate purposes, would, in process of time, afford her such continual opportunities for interference and regulation, and such frequent pretences for sending armies into the country to support her decisions, that all the substantial benefits of conquest would thus be obtained without the odium and jealousy ever inseparable from that term. These schemes were destroyed by the Swedish revolution, which regenerated the government of that country; and the Russian cabinet regarded with jealousy an active monarch, under whose rule her coveted prey had eluded her. When, therefore, Gustavus offered his services to avert the war, by mediation between Russia and the Porte, they were rejected by the former power with contemptuous scorn. This aroused into activity the hereditary hatred between Sweden and Russia; and Gustavus, moreover, felt that it might be a more prudent policy to attack his gigantic neighbour while she was occupied in a war with Turkey, than to permit her subsequently to turn her hostile armies against him. Gustavus was, moreover, subsidised by Turkey; while Prussia lent him money; and England (now openly showing its ill-will towards Russia) promised him the assistance of a fleet.

The Swedish fleet captured two Russian frigates as they were cruising off Sweaborg; while Gustavus himself, at the head of 30,000 men, marched against Fredericshaum—circumstances which created both astonishment and alarm at St. Petersburg. That city was almost unprotected; for all the Russian troops had been sent off to fight against the Turks; and Gustavus trusted to cover himself with glory, by retaking from Russia the provinces lost by

Charles XII. He even, on the 1st of July, haughtily demanded that Catherine should restore them; that she should accept of his mediation to restore peace between her and the Ottoman Porte, and authorise him to offer to the Porte the cession of the Crimea, and the restoration of her frontiers as they existed before the war of 1768. Catherine's astonishment at these extravagant demands was exceeded by her indignation and her intrepidity. In a tone of irony she asked the French ambassador what he thought of them. "It seems to me, madam," replied the count, "that the king of Sweden, deceived by a flattering dream, fancies that he has already obtained three brilliant victories over your majesty." "And if he had gained them, count," rejoined Catherine with warmth—"were he even in possession of St. Petersburg and Moscow, I would still show him of what a woman of high character is capable, at the head of a brave and devoted people, and standing erect on the ruins of a great empire." Yet Catherine experienced considerable uneasiness; Gustavus had taken the Russians by surprise, and it was extremely possible that he might be able, for a short time, to expel the empress from her capital, and recover possession of Livonia. Gustavus himself was so confident of such a result, that he actually invited the ladies of Stockholm to the ball he promised to give them at Peterhoff, and to the *Te Deum* he intended to celebrate in the cathedral of St. Petersburg.

It was rumoured throughout the city that the palace was all in alarm; that the jewels, furniture, objects of value, and private papers of the empress were packing up; that a great number of horses were in readiness at every post, and that Catherine intended to leave in the night, and seek for safety at Moscow. The empress heard, and contemptuously denied, the rumour. "I have given orders," said she, "for a great number of horses to be immediately collected along the road to Moscow, but only to bring up, in all haste, the regiments I have called for. I remain in my capital; if I should quit it, it would only be to go and meet the king of Sweden." It was not without reason that that brilliant and vivacious Austrian, the Prince de Ligne, gave her the name of the *imperturbable*!

The Swedish troops were opposed by such Russian forces as could be hastily collected; and several petty actions took place, in which the former were generally suc-



cessful. The Swedish fleet cruised about the gulf, and advanced defiantly even within sight of the batteries of Cronstadt. From the harbour of that great fortress, Admiral Greig issued with a strong fleet to counteract the designs of the enemy. There were many British officers besides the admiral on board this Russian fleet; for numbers, finding, at the conclusion of the American war, neither reward nor active employment in their own country, had tendered their services to the empress. The notorious buccaneer, Paul Jones, who had gained so much distinction by piratical efforts against his countrymen during the American war, was also received by Catherine into her service, and made a Russian admiral. The English officers considered it a degradation to serve with such a man, and threatened to lay down their commissions rather than act in any capacity whatever with a pirate and a renegade. The court of St. Petersburg was both vexed and embarrassed. Punctilios of honour, operating in the face of command, was a thing unheard of in that service. No Russian, unless of the highest rank, would dare to insinuate such an idea. The conduct of the British officers was regarded as a direct insult to the Russian government, and would, no doubt, have been resented as such at any other period. But the necessity of the time prevailed; Paul Jones was recalled from his command in the Cronstadt fleet; and a circumstance shortly afterwards occurred, which induced his retirement from the Russian service.

On the 22nd of July, 1788, the Russian and Swedish naval forces met off the island of Hoghland. An engagement of two hours followed; when each side, having lost one vessel and had several others disabled, claimed the victory. In a subsequent engagement, the Swedes were thrown into some confusion, and lost the *Gustavus Adolphus*, a ship of sixty guns, which was taken and burnt by the enemy. The Swedes, precluded from the means of refitting, continued during the campaign shut up in the harbour of Sweaborg; while the Russian fleet cruised triumphantly about the gulf.

The military efforts of Gustavus were rendered almost powerless by a disaffection which spread among his officers, especially those in high commands, several of whom, he found, carried on a traitorous correspondence with the enemy. A great number of others declared openly, that they could not, without a violation of their con-

science and the oaths they had taken to their country, draw their swords in a war undertaken without the consent of the states of the kingdom, and therefore contrary to the constitution. To such an extent was this mutinous feeling carried, that at the siege of Fredericshaum, the officers refused to lead their troops to the attack, and many regiments of the men laid down their arms. At the same time, an irruption of the Danes—who acted in concert with Russia—into the richest provinces of Sweden, induced Gustavus to abandon his refractory army in Finland, and hasten to drive this new foe from his dominions. Such was the ill-success of a monarch who, on entering into the war, had been so carried away by his ambition, as to say vauntingly—"Should fortune favour the arms of my people, of all the monuments of Russian insolence I will only spare the statue of Peter the Great, in order to engrave upon the pedestal, and immortalise, the name of Augustus." Fortunately for Sweden, there existed in Europe an alliance which proved a counterpoise to the combined power of Russia and of Austria. A treaty, with that object, had been concluded between England, Prussia, and Holland; and the king of Denmark was compelled, in consequence of their threats, to withdraw his troops from Sweden, and to conclude a peace with Gustavus.

During this period two or three desperate engagements had taken place between the Turkish and Russian fleets in that broad lake which is formed by the Dnieper and the Bug before their junction with the Black Sea. In these, notwithstanding the valour of the Turks, the Russians were victorious. Indeed, such is the constitutional indolence of the Turks, that they showed themselves totally ignorant of the navigation of a river which for ages had been in their possession.

The Russians defeated the Tartars of the Kuban in several encounters, and made themselves masters of Georgia. A Russian army, estimated at 150,000 men, under the orders of Prince Potemkin, assisted by the most distinguished generals of his country, including Suwarrow, frequently beat the Turks; who, in their turn, inflicted a severe check upon the Austrians. Potemkin, who had himself done little to contribute to the success of the Russian arms, considered, or affected to consider, it to be the consequence of his having built a new church to his patron saint, and declared, with an arro-



gant impiety—"I am, indeed, *the spoiled child of God!*"

Potemkin had been long employed in the siege of Otchakoff, which was protected by fortifications of uncommon strength, and supplied, not only with a numerous garrison, but also an abundant supply of ammunition and provisions. As to the Russians, they died in great numbers every night, from the severity of the cold, and suffered from want of provisions. The cold, however, enabled them to attack the fortress from the water-side, where it was less fortified, and now approachable upon the ice. It was taken by assault, led by subordinate officers, while Potemkin himself remained in his camp with his mistresses. This was the result of eccentricity rather than fear; for only a few days before, he had passed many times to and fro, with the utmost coolness, under the very cannon of the ramparts, because he had heard that some one had presumed to suspect his courage.

The Turkish garrison within Otchakoff defended themselves with the utmost bravery; and almost the whole of these unfortunate men were sabred by the victors. Many of the inhabitants shared the same fate, and the town was given up to plunder. A horrible revel of blood and debauchery lasted during three days, and cost the lives of 25,000 Turks. Amongst the captives were 4,000 women, who were spared less from motives of pity than from those of sensuality. The Russians, however, did not obtain their triumph cheaply, as they were ten times repulsed, and lost no less than 12,000 men in the assault; an expense of life at which even victories were undesirable. This was felt by the empress, who, early in 1789, ordered a fresh levy of recruits throughout her dominions, and even brought exiles from the wilds of Siberia to serve in her armies. So infuriated were the Russians at Otchakoff, on account of the severe losses they suffered, that two days after the assault, when the fury of the battle-hour might be supposed to have cooled, on finding Turkish children who had been concealed, they threw them into the air, and caught them on the points of their bayonets, saying, "These, at least, shall do no harm to Christians."

It is not necessary to dwell upon all the

\* *The French Revolution; a History*: by Thomas Carlyle. The eccentric and eloquent author thus points to the true causes of this great convulsion, this "truth clad in hell-fire:"—"Shall we say, then,

events of this war; and we may thus sum up the events of the year 1788. The Turks had been beaten at Kilburn, and repulsed in the Crimea; in the Black Sea they had experienced several reverses, and lost many of their ships. They had lost Otchakoff, with the adjacent territory; they had been compelled to evacuate Wallachia, while the Tartars of the Kuban had been dispersed. The Austrians, despite some reverses, had taken Dubitza, Sabatch, and Novi; and the king of Sweden was driven out of Russian Finland, and his fleet blockaded at Sweaborg. At this period, France made some effort to bring about a peace; but Catherine desired first to effect a fourfold alliance between Russia, Austria, France, and Spain, for the purpose of promoting each other's interests, and counteracting the influence of England and Prussia. Fortunately, neither France nor Spain could be brought to coincide with the views of the empress. Prince Potemkin also began to entertain different ideas upon the subject; for, finding that the emperor of Austria desired to back out of the war, and regarding the support of France as uncertain, he changed his system, and began to recommend to his sovereign a connection with England and Prussia, as being more formidable enemies, and more useful friends.

During the year 1789, the Swedes experienced several reverses, but scarcely of a kind to render them incapable of continuing the war, or to give much distinction to their enemies. Indeed, Gustavus found, in his talents and courage, resources proportioned to the greatness of the perils which threatened him.

It was the year 1789 which saw the destruction of the infamous Bastille, and the outbreak in France of that terrible revolution which eventually convulsed Europe and astonished the world. The crowned heads of the continent beheld the preliminary throes of this social storm with surprise and perplexity, but none of them appeared to foresee what was to follow. It did not occur to one of them to consider what would be the result, "if, indeed, that dark living chaos of ignorance and hunger, five-and-twenty millions strong, under his feet, were to begin playing!"\*

Gustavus, in 1790, himself took the com-

Woe to philosophism, that it destroyed religion; what it called 'extinguishing the abomination (*écraser l'infame*!)" Woe rather to those that made the holy an abomination, and extinguishable; woe to all



mand of his fleet; and, after a desperate battle, defeated that of the Russians, under the command of the Prince of Nassau, from whom he captured thirty vessels. The Swedish monarch followed up this advantage by disembarking several battalions of infantry, and some squadrons of light troops, at a distance of not more than thirty miles from St. Petersburg. The city and the imperial residence was thus again struck with consternation; but the empress remained at her summer palace. She commanded General Igelström to spare nothing in the attempt to recapture the post taken by the Swedes, and to drive them from her dominions.

By sea, Gustavus experienced first a reverse, and then a great victory. The Russian fleet was twice as large as that of the Swedes, but half of it was destroyed or captured, together with no less than 10,000 men. The Prince of Nassau, who commanded the Russians, imagined that they had purposely allowed themselves to be defeated, with the base object of tarnishing his reputation. With this impression he wrote to the empress—"Madam, I have had the misfortune to fight against the elements, the Swedes, and the Russians. I hope that your majesty will do me justice." As Catherine readily accepted this apology, we may presume that there was some truth in the supposition of the prince. Still she must have experienced much secret humiliation at having been defeated by a power which, until recently, she had despised.

Gustavus had retrieved his reputation, and was by no means unwilling to retire from a war on which he had so imprudently entered. Catherine, also, had more fighting on her hands than she desired, or even her vast resources were calculated to meet. When, therefore, Spain offered her mediation, it was at once accepted; and Catherine, with an affected generosity in this instance, proposed liberal terms to her Swedish neighbour. She requested no more than the re-establishment of the treaties of Neustadt and Abo, and the total oblivion of the late hostilities. Peace was signed at Væla on the 14th of August, 1790. It

men that live in such a time of world-abomination and world-destruction! Nay, answer the courtiers, it was Turgot, it was Necker, with their mad innovating; it was the queen's want of etiquette; it was he, it was she, it was that. Friends! it was every scoundrel that had lived, and, quack-like, pretended to be doing, and had only been eating and misdoing,

will excite little surprise that the news of the peace was received with much joy at Stockholm; but it was remarked with astonishment, that the public rejoicings at St. Petersburg were carried to an extreme, which seemed little consistent either with the pride of that court, or with the contempt with which it had so recently affected to regard its late adversary.

We must return to our narrative of the war which Catherine was waging against her eastern neighbours, the Turks, whose sultan, Abdul Achmed IV., died in the year 1789, and was succeeded by the capricious, but enlightened reformer, Selim III. Though the empress had failed in her scheme of driving the Turks out of Europe, and placing her grandson Constantine on the throne of the ancient Greek emperors; though the jealousy of the other great powers of Europe had also induced her to abandon her next favourite object of erecting the provinces of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bessarabia into an independent sovereignty for her favourite minister, Potemkin; yet, with respect to the Crimea, the Black Sea, and all other points of her claim upon Turkey, she maintained an inflexible firmness. England and Prussia expostulated with warmth, and even wore a threatening aspect. This it was that had made the empress anxious to conclude a peace with Sweden; for if the energetic Gustavus had been supported by English fleets and Prussian armies, he might have been enabled to carry fire and sword into the heart of the Russian empire. But this difficulty provided against, Catherine relaxed no jot of her efforts against the Turks. Prince Repnin and General Suwarrow, who had taken Otchakoff, obtained magnificent presents from the empress. Suwarrow, whom Byron has tersely described as

"Hero, buffoon, half-demon, and half-dirt,"

received, amongst other things, a gorgeous plume of brilliants to wear in his hat; a strange present for a man whose habits were so disgusting, that he sometimes took off his shirt, when amongst the Cossacks, and directed them to hold it to the fire, saying,

in all provinces of life, as shoeblack or as sovereign lord, from the time of Charlemagne and earlier. All this (for be sure no falsehood perishes, but is as seed sown out to grow) has been storing itself for thousands of years; and now the account-day has come. And rude will the settlement be: of wrath laid up against the day of wrath."



that it was the best way of killing the vermin.

Catherine showered rewards not only on her generals who captured Otchakoff, but even on the subalterns and common soldiers. This excited an active spirit of emulation in the Russian armies, and their progress now seemed one continued triumph. During the year 1789, Prince Potemkin took the island of Beresan; Prince Repnin drove the Turks from the borders of the Solska; while Suwarrow defeated them at Fokshiani. The latter then hurried, at the head of 8,000 men, to the assistance of the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, who, with 30,000 Austrians, had been attacked by an army of 100,000 Turks. The Austrians were already flying before their enemies, when Suwarrow came up with his handful of men, and changed the fortune of the day. "My friends!" said he to his soldiers, "never look at the eyes of your enemies. Fix your view at their breasts; it is there you must thrust your bayonets." A furious charge followed, the Turks were routed with a dreadful carnage, and he remained master of the field of battle.

Suwarrow has been accused of wanton cruelty—a charge which is not without foundation; but, on this occasion, he deemed it expedient to give the Turks no quarter, on account of their great numbers; and there can be little doubt that, judged as we must judge such matters from a military point of view, he was right. Besides, Suwarrow was a soldier of impulse, not of intellect and calculation; and he gave way, in the hour of victory, to that savage excitement which exists in a latent state, to some extent, in most men; even in those who, under ordinary circumstances, are generally actuated by feelings of benevolence. Thus, on this occasion, Suwarrow stood upon an eminence surrounded by his staff, and while he watched the progress of the terrible carnage caused by the artillery firing incessantly upon the wretches who had plunged into the river Rymnik, exclaimed repeatedly, "Yes, yes; as I always say, the bayonet for victory, and then hurrah for the cannon and the cavalry to sweep up the runaways." This was in accordance with his mode of warfare, which is best described in his own brief sentences; such as—"Forward and strike!—No theory!—Attack!—Push with bayonet!—Trust to the naked steel!—The ball is a fool; the bayonet a hero!" So confident had success made him in these tactics, that when,

on another occasion, an Austrian general recommended a *reconnaissance*, he responded, "*Reconnaissance!* I am for none of them; they are of no use but to the timid, and to inform the enemy that you are approaching. It is never difficult to find your opponents when you really wish it! Form column—charge bayonets—plunge into the centre of the enemy: these are my *reconnaissances*." This extraordinary creature, eventually regarded by his countrymen as the first of Russian generals, was as singular in his appearance as he was repulsive in his habits. Miserably thin, and almost a dwarf in stature (being only five feet one inch in height), the unpromising nature of his exterior was increased by a pug nose, and a mouth of uncommon size. He appeared to regard contempt for cleanliness as a soldierly virtue. He slept upon hay or straw; his wardrobe consisted of his uniform and a sheepskin; and he seldom wore linen, except on occasions of ceremony or parade.

This victory, gained near the river Rymnik, procured for Suwarrow the surname of Rymnikski;\* while the titles of count, both of the Roman and Russian empire, were conferred upon him. Shortly afterwards he captured Turtukai in Bulgaria; and many other towns, both in Bessarabia and on the Danube, were taken by the Russians. Indeed, defeat became almost habitual to the Turks, and the Ottoman power shook to its foundations.

The Russians learnt to despise their foes; while the Turks feared that the hand of the prophet was against them, and that they were fated to humiliation. In the month of September, 1790, a combined force of Austrians and Russians, under the Prince of Coburg and General Suwarrow, estimated only at about 30,000 men, had the temerity to attack the grand Turkish army, amounting to 90,000. The battle took place near Martinesti in Wallachia; and the allies, with little loss or difficulty, gained a signal and extraordinary victory. It was, indeed, rather a slaughter and a dispersion than a battle. About 7,000 Turks perished, and nothing but the blunted sabres and tired horses of the pursuers checked the butchery. No prisoners were taken; for the Turks, maddened by shame, disdained to accept of quarter. Their whole camp fell to the victors; and 300 camels, 400 oxen, 5,000 loaded waggons, 3,000 tents, six mortars, seventeen pieces of heavy cannon, sixty-four

\* That is, "He of the Rymnik."



field-pieces, near 100 standards, and a prodigious quantity of ammunition and stores, were among the spoils. The loss of the victors amounted to but a few hundred men killed and wounded.

The Russians pursued their conquests to the Black Sea; but Ismail, or Ismailow—an unskilfully fortified town in Bessarabia, at the mouth of the Danube—still held out. It had been besieged by Potemkin for seven months; but at length, growing impatient, he resolved upon taking it at any cost of life whatever.

In the camp this extravagant and eccentric man passed his time like one of those ancient satraps whom he equalled, and almost surpassed, in luxurious sensuality. Abandoned to indolence and pleasure, he was surrounded by a crowd of parasites and women, who employed every effort to amuse him. One of these ladies, pretending to read the decrees of fate in the arrangement of a pack of cards, predicted that he would take the town at the end of three weeks. Potemkin, with a smile, replied, that he had a mode of divination far less fallible, and immediately sent his orders to Suwarrow to come from Galatz and take Ismail within three days. Suwarrow was the idol of the Russian soldiers; and, on his arrival, they were animated by a feeling of enthusiasm. The fortifications of Ismail had been erected without advanced works; and Suwarrow, on glancing at the crumbling wall and half-choked moat on the landward side of the town, at once resolved on an assault. To excite still more the ardour and ferocity of the soldiers, he promised to give the town up to them to plunder, and commanded them to yield no quarter until it was taken. On the 21st of September he twice summoned the city to surrender, and threatened the inhabitants with the fate of Otchakoff in the event of refusal. The Turks, however, disdained his threats, and he gave orders to prepare for the assault. In the evening he assembled his chief officers, and gave his final directions for an escalade, in seven columns, an hour before daybreak on the following morning. Admiral Ribas was to assist by attacking with his whole force, at the same hour, on the side of the Danube. The advanced troops were not only to carry ladders, but bags of earth, to fill up more completely, where necessary, the filth-choked ditch. Having concluded his explanations to his officers, Suwarrow dismissed them, saying, "You now understand

what is to be done, and how to do it. Two hours before daybreak I shall rise, say my prayers, dress myself, go out in front of the tent, and crow like a cock. The men must then be immediately got under arms. At the second crow, which will be just half-an-hour after the first, I expect everything to be in readiness for the advance; and, at the third crow, you will push forward according to my directions. And do not forget what I have already told you—that, till resistance has entirely ceased upon every point, the men must not be encumbered with prisoners."

At four o'clock the cock-crow was given, and so natural a sound before daybreak did not alarm the Turks. The assault took place; but the assailants were twice repulsed with terrible loss. The Cossacks, unused to storming operations, were mostly shot down or cut to pieces. At length the city was entered; but the hottest part of the struggle took place within it. Every inch of ground was savagely contested; every street was converted into a fortress; every house became a redoubt. Amidst the roar of cannon, the clash of sabres, the wild cries of the assailants, the imprecations of the Moslems, and the shrieks of the wounded, was heard, at intervals, the voices of the Russian officers, shouting, "Forward! Strike! No quarter! No prisoners!" Still four hours of horror elapsed, after the Russians entered the city, before they were enabled to fight their way to the market-place, where the Tartars of the Crimea were collected. For two hours more they fought with all the fury of despair, neither seeking nor giving mercy. They were at length all massacred; but the struggle was still kept up in the streets. At last a passage was made for the cavalry into the city, and they charged through the streets, and cut down men, women, and children, until four o'clock in the day, when resistance ceased. Then—to quote the language of one of the greatest of our modern poets—

"The crescent's silver bow  
Sunk, and the crimson cross glared o'er the field,  
But red with no redeeming gore; the glow  
Of burning streets, like moonlight on the water,  
Was imaged back in blood, the sea of slaughter."

The fighting ceased at four o'clock, but not the carnage; for Suwarrow gave the devoted city up to be plundered by his maddened and ferocious troops. This work of horror was prolonged for three days and nights, during which many Turks sacrificed



their lives in defending their property, and many women were slain after poniarding the ruffians who attempted to violate them. Suwarrow, in the meantime, dispatched a bulletin to Prince Poteskin, which, in doggerel Russian rhyme, expressed the following meaning—"Glory to God! Glory to thee! Ismail is ours, and I am in it." Yet this man appears not to have been altogether destitute of human emotion. On an English traveller (who afterwards met him in the Ukraine) asking him if, after the massacre at Ismail, he was perfectly satisfied with the conduct of the day? he replied, that he went to his tent and wept.

It is estimated that no less than 33,000 Turks were killed or severely wounded, and 10,000 (including women) taken prisoners. Eight days were occupied in burying the dead or throwing them into the Danube. It was said that the Russians purchased this sanguinary triumph at a cost of 15,000 men; though that is, no doubt, an exaggeration, as Suwarrow himself stated his loss at 2,000 killed and 2,500 wounded. The very day after the assault, Suwarrow, who was extremely superstitious, and very attentive to all the formulas of religion, caused a solemn service of thanksgiving to God to be celebrated in the convent church of St. John. There was something shocking, if not blasphemous, in this proceeding, as the intonations of the priests and the responses of the military congregation were constantly broken in upon by the shrieks, curses, and pistol-shots arising from the authorised plundering and violence then in full operation without and around the building.

After the taking of Ismail, Prince Poteskin returned to St. Petersburg, to enjoy the honours which were really due to Suwarrow. The empress received her eccentric minister with transports of joy, and bestowed on him another palace, which had been fitted up for his reception at an expense of 600,000 roubles; and also a coat laced with diamonds, which cost 200,000. Poteskin himself exhibited a pomp and an extravagance which would have appeared excessive in the most splendid court in Europe. The expense of his table alone, was, on ordinary occasions, about 800 roubles a-day. In the depth of winter he purchased all the cherries of a tree reared in a hothouse, at a rouble the cherry. He possessed an enormous quan-

tity of jewels, some of which he never looked at again after he had purchased them. On one occasion he took a dislike to his diamonds, and ordered them to be sold: not long after, he desired to repurchase them, and directed them to be repurchased at any price. In the latter part of his life, this man, who had all Russia at his feet, suffered greatly from depression of spirits. At these times he would spend long winter evenings playing with his diamonds, as children do with toys. Sometimes he would sit pouring them from one hand into the other; then he would amuse himself, for hours, by spreading them out on a black velvet in the forms of circles, crosses, and fanciful figures. During these periods of depression, he would pass a couple of hours in biting his nails as he walked up and down his apartment, though there were a score of persons present.

Poteskin probably cultivated eccentricity as a source of distinction. This he obtained, apparently, in a proportion far exceeding his merits; for though there were many princes in Russia, most of them his superior by birth, yet he was always called *the prince*, by way of excellence. The lustre of gigantic talents would necessarily eclipse that of high birth; but the abilities of Poteskin, though considerable, could not be regarded as great. He was indebted largely to personal qualifications for his elevated position, and his genius may be said to have been rather physical than mental. His eccentricity was blended with a strong acquisitiveness, and he had a childish eagerness to procure the most costly things of every kind. Though he never played on a violin in his life, yet he had ten or a dozen which had cost him an exorbitant price; one of them being estimated at the value of 6,000 roubles. Yet he allowed them all to be either spoiled by the dust or gnawed by the rats. When some one spoke to him of a magnificent library, he observed, that he had one of greater value than the most learned man in Europe could show. He then opened a small case, containing several shelves of books, which, on being taken down, were seen to be boxes, gilt and lettered at the back, filled with bank assignats, and rouleaux of imperials and ducats, to an amazing amount. With all this wealth, it was with great difficulty that he could be brought to pay his debts; for, like all profligates, he loved display more than justice. To those who paid their court to him, he usually



behaved with great insolence; and he more than once struck a Russian prince or general in public—a gross indignity, which certainly no gentleman out of that empire would submit to. Yet, from a knowledge of the Russian character, and, no doubt, from motives of policy, he was kind and condescending to the soldiers, who, accordingly, were attached to him in return. Many strange projects of ambition were attributed to him. It was even supposed that he designed taking advantage of the influence he had over the troops, for excluding from the throne the Grand-duke Paul and his sons, on the death of the empress, and of causing the eldest of the grand-duchesses to be crowned. It was added, that he designed to marry her, or, at any rate, to have reigned in her name.

After the fall of Ismail, Potemkin remained for several months at St. Petersburg, during which period he expended upwards of 1,200,000 roubles. An entertainment which he gave to the empress at the Tauridan palace, reminds us of the fabulous scenes of magnificence in the fairy tales of the East. His mind was probably weakened by long-continued debauchery, and he felt a presentiment that this would be the last blaze of his grandeur. He resolved, therefore, to distinguish the occasion by a gorgeousness which should elevate the whim of an hour to the dignity of an historical incident. A month was passed in preparations, and several hundred persons were daily assembled for the purpose of rehearsing the final entertainment. The empress, the imperial family, the court, the foreign ministers, the nobility, and great part of the people of condition in the city were invited. When Catherine entered her carriage, immense piles of garments, lofty pyramids of eatables, and an enormous supply of liquors, were distributed to the populace. On her entrance into the Tauridan palace, she was greeted by the music arising from an orchestra of 600 performers. When she and the brilliant company had taken their seats, four-and-twenty couple of the most beautiful persons of both sexes, and of noble birth, including among them the Grand-dukes Alexander and Constantine, opened the dances with a quadrille. Their dresses, the value of which was estimated at 10,000,000 of roubles, were all white, and the wearers were only distinguishable by the colours of their girdles and scarfs. The music to which they danced was accompanied with singing, and a famous vocalist concluded the scene with a solo.

The company then proceeded to another hall, hung with tapestry of the most costly kind. In it stood an artificial elephant, decorated with emeralds and rubies. It was led by a Persian, who struck upon a bell, at which signal a curtain rose and displayed a magnificently-decorated theatre, where two ballets and a dramatic piece were performed. On the termination of the latter, the company divided into the several rooms of the palace, all of which were illuminated with a magnificence which struck the spectators with amazement. The walls and columns seemed to glow with various-coloured fires, while large mirrors, attached to the sides of the apartments, or made to form pyramids and grottoes, multiplied the effect, and even made the whole enclosure seem to be composed of sparkling stoves. Six hundred persons then sat down at one table to supper, and the rest were entertained at sideboards. Every article of use was of gold or silver; flowers were in the most delicious abundance; a multitude of servants, in superb dresses, were in attendance; and nothing that the most studied epicurism was able to procure could be asked for in vain!

Catherine was pleased, and, for the first time for many years, made an exception to her general rule, by staying till midnight, in order not to disturb the pleasure of the host and his company. On her entering the vestibule after supper, the choir of voices melodiously chanted a hymn to her praise. Surprised and affected, she turned round to the prince, who, overpowered with emotion, fell on his knee, and, seizing her hand, bedewed it with tears. A gloomy foreboding seemed to shake his whole frame, and his countenance was expressive of the conviction, that this was the last time he should ever, on that spot, pour out his gratitude to his magnanimous patroness.

Having passed five months at St. Petersburg, Potemkin, satiated with pomp and grandeur, quitted it to return to the army. Pleasure no longer satisfied him; he felt a conviction he should never return; he was restless and uneasy, and his frequent sighs betrayed the gloom that filled his mind. Some time before his departure the empress had dismissed Count Momonoff, and taken another lover into favour. "That extraordinary woman," said Ségur, "presented in her character an astonishing mixture of the strength of our sex and the weakness of her own. Age had set its stamp upon her features; but her heart, as well as her self-love,



preserved their youth ; both the one and the other were now severely wounded."

Catherine not only behaved to Count Momonoff with her accustomed liberality, but even permitted him to extort from her the most extravagant sums. Love was not to be expected from a man in such a position ; but he might have refrained from insult. Young enough to be her son, he felt his life to resemble that of a slave, and groaned beneath the yoke of a favour which restrained his liberty. His prison was a palace, and his fetters chains of roses ; yet still he sighed for freedom. In this condition he contracted a passion for the Princess Scherebatoff, one of the ladies of honour to the empress. The princess returned his attachment ; and having received from him assurances of constancy, is presumed to have granted him those favours which ladies usually reserve for their husbands. This amour was for some time known to all the court except the empress. At length she became aware of it, and told Momonoff that he had not surrendered to her the whole of his heart. She added, that, as she wished his happiness, she had formed the design of uniting him to the young Countess Bruce, one of the richest heiresses of the empire. Momonoff declined the intended honour, and the empress desired to know the cause of his reluctance. As, in spite of his embarrassment, she insisted on being informed on this point, he threw himself at her feet, confessed that he had plighted his faith to the Princess Scherebatoff ; that, though ashamed of his ingratitude, he was incapable of changing his sentiments ; and implored the clemency of his sovereign. Irritated by this information, Catherine quitted the court, and secluded herself in her apartments. She, however, speedily recovered from a passion and a weakness little worthy of her. Commanding the presence of Momonoff and the princess, she had them affianced before her, gave a rich dowry to her maid of honour, and a valuable estate to the count. She even attended at the marriage ceremony ; and, in accordance with custom, herself placed a set of diamonds on the head of the bride. Having gained this victory over her pride, she commanded them to retire from her court.

Whatever were the weaknesses of Catherine, meanness was not one of them. She was entitled to at least respect from the man whose ingratitude towards her she had the power to punish. The count, however,

had the meanness and the want of prudence to mention to his wife the particulars of his interviews with the empress, and the countess had the dangerous folly to divulge them with a levity injurious to her imperial mistress. That sovereign punished the babbler with peculiar and eccentric severity. The newly-married couple had retired to Moscow ; and one night, after they had gone to rest, the master of the police of that city entered their apartment. Then showing them an order from the empress, he left them in the hands of six men disguised as women, and retired to an adjoining chamber. The pretended women then seized the talkative lady, and having entirely stripped her of her night-clothes, whipped her severely with rods in the presence of her husband, whom they forced to kneel down and witness this humiliating flagellation. When the chastisement was over, the police-master re-entered the room, and said, "This is the way the empress punishes a first indiscretion. For the second, people are sent to Siberia."

It might have been supposed that, in the neighbourhood of the Hyperborean regions, the passions, if not dormant, would be at least moderate, and that the men would consequently be temperate, and the women chaste. Facts, however, lead us to a contrary conclusion ; and it is left to the philosophers to determine, whether the double windows and heated rooms of St. Petersburg, added to an affectation of Oriental manners, be not to the full as critical, in respect to female virtue, as the climate of Naples or Turin. Though now declining in years, the empress still gave way to those sensual pleasures to which she had ever shown so strong a partiality. Momonoff was no sooner dismissed, than she received Plato Zuboff, a young officer of the guards, into her favour. His name suggested to Russian wits the pun, that the empress, after all her amours, concluded with Platonic love. This person rendered himself so agreeable to the empress, that in a short time he became almost omnipotent at St. Petersburg. Not content with wealth and honours, he affected public employments. He was decorated with the title of prince, and received the post of grand-master of the artillery. Nearly all the admirals, generals, and ministers of the empire were to be seen at his *levée*, anxious to obtain his smile of approbation, and even paying their compliments at the same time, in great form, to his favourite monkey !



The king of Prussia had signed a treaty with the Turks, and another with the Poles. Catherine thus lost an ally, and was exposed to the probability of having a new enemy to contend with. But though Frederic William did not draw the sword against her, he sent his troops into Poland, under pretence of defending that country; and, what perhaps occasioned still more irritation at the Russian court, he took possession of the cities of Dantzic and Thorn.

Catherine saw at length, that her victories over the Turks were not only dearly purchased, but, in fact, ruinous; and that remote conquests might bring on the loss of the provinces which she possessed in Poland. Though she felt peace to be necessary, yet her pride forbade her to seem to desire it; and rather than do so, she chose to continue the war. This involved the heavier responsibility, as the death of her ally, the emperor Joseph II.,\* on the 20th of February, 1790, left her to contend with the Ottomans singly.

Victory still favoured the Russian troops, and they continued to gain unfruitful triumphs. In the May of 1791, General Kutusoff defeated a combined army of Turks and Tartars at Babada in Bulgaria; and in the July following, Prince Repnin, at the head of 25,000 men, entirely routed 70,000 Ottomans, whom he met and engaged not far from Matzin. General Gudovitch also, brother of the favourite of Peter III., captured the fortresses of Sudyuk-Kaly and of Anapa, on the frontiers of the Crimea and the coast of Circassia. But Austria concluded in this year (1791), at Szistowa, a peace with Turkey, by which she restored all conquests to the latter power.

The revolution which was convulsing France produced a considerable revulsion of feeling in the empress Catherine. Falling into the common error which attributed that great and terrible outbreak to the

writings of the French philosophers, she discountenanced the study of them, and banished the busts of Voltaire and of our own statesman, Fox, to a lumber-room. When the French ambassador left her court, she observed to him, "Your predilection for the new philosophy and for liberty, will probably incline you to support the cause of the people; I shall regret it; for aristocracy is my profession, and I must adhere to it." The state of France, and her desire to extinguish the revolution, inclined Catherine to forget, or try to forget, her animosity towards England; the more so, as this country, taking advantage of the moment when she was detaching herself from France, endeavoured to revive the amicable connection that had formerly existed between Russia and Great Britain.

England, therefore, proposed to mediate between the empress and the sultan, on condition that, in making peace, Catherine should consent to give up her conquests, and to take the treaty of Kainardshi as the basis of the new arrangements. The northern Cleopatra acted with a proud independence, and treated a special envoy, sent from this country, with alternate conciliation and cold reserve. But Catherine had resolved on making peace with the Porte, and she accepted the mediation of England, which was carried on in conjunction with her allies, Prussia and Holland. These three powers agreed to propose to Turkey the terms to which the empress was disposed to submit, and declared that, in the event of the refusal by the Turks, they would abandon their cause and leave them to prosecute the war alone with Russia.

Preliminaries of peace between Russia and the Porte were signed on the 9th of January, 1792, at Jassy. It was calculated that, in this war, Austria lost 130,000 soldiers, and expended 300,000,000 of

\* Count Ségur observes—"This prince, without being a great man, was a monarch equally just, virtuous, and prone to toleration; severe to himself, indulgent to others, kind, indefatigable, accessible to truth, even occupied in relieving misfortunes, in encouraging the arts, and in rewarding merit. Prince de Ligne, who sincerely deplored his loss, wrote the following lines to the empress Catherine:—'It will be said by the soldier—Joseph II. stood many a cannon-shot at the dike of Beschania, and many a musket-shot in the suburbs of Sabatch; he has had medals struck as rewards for bravery. By the traveller—what splendid establishments for schools, for hospitals, for prisons, and for education! By the manufacturer—what encouragement given to

commerce. By the common labourer—he has himself ploughed the ground. By the heretic—he was our protector. By the president of every department, the heads of all offices—he was our chief clerk, whilst at the same time he was superintending us. By the ministers—he was falling a sacrifice for the state, of which he called himself the first subject. By the sick—he never ceased to visit us. By the citizen—he embellished our town with squares and public walks. By the peasant and the servant—we spoke to him whenever we pleased. By heads of families—he aided us with his advice. By society—he was safe and of agreeable manners; he related agreeably; there was much point in his conversation; truth could be told to him upon every subject."



florins. Russia lost 200,000 men, five ships of the line, seven frigates, and fourteen smaller vessels, and expended 200,000 roubles. The Turkish loss was estimated at 330,000 men, six ships of the line, and four frigates, with several other vessels; and an expense of 250,000,000 piastres. Yet the peace placed affairs much on the standing in which they were before the commencement of this sanguinary and expensive conflict. The Dniester was recognised as the boundary between the two empires; the ancient rights of Moldavia and Wallachia were confirmed; and the Porte agreed to put a stop to the proceedings of the barbarous corsairs, and to restore all Russian prisoners.

The presentiments of Prince Potemkin were not without foundation. He did not live to witness the conclusion of the peace with Turkey. Having repaired to the congress of Jassy, he was there attacked with an epidemical fever. On hearing that he was ill, the empress sent two of her most experienced physicians to his assistance. He, however, disdained their advice, and lived with his usual freedom. Nothing could induce him to control his appetite. His breakfast usually consisted of the greater part of a smoke-dried goose from Hamburg, and slices of hung beef or ham, after which he drank a quantity of wine and Dantzic liqueurs. At dinner he was equally voracious. It cannot, therefore, create surprise that his disorder gained upon him; though a groundless suspicion was afterwards entertained that he had been poisoned. Fancying that a removal from Jassy might benefit him, he set out for Nicolaieff, a town he himself had built. Scarcely, however, had he travelled ten

miles, when he felt himself to be dying. He was taken out of his carriage, and laid down on the grass by the roadside, under a tree, where he expired in the arms of his niece, the Princess Branicka. His death took place on the 15th of October, 1791, at the age of fifty-two. His body was removed to Cherson, where a magnificent mausoleum was raised to him by command of the empress.

The name of Potemkin holds a conspicuous place in the annals of Russia. Nature, in order to render him remarkable in every point of view, had given him a gigantic stature, and a proportion of bodily strength such as, in fabulous times, excited astonishment in a Hercules and a Theseus. When first beheld, he had something savage in his appearance, which exhibited an extraordinary mixture of rude and of cultivated nature. His look was animated, lively, and piercing; his countenance, fine, pliant, and lofty, bespoke the head of a Richelieu or a Mazarin, on the robust shoulders of a savage. Prone to taciturnity, and eager to listen, his silence was the silence of thought and reflection. Active, indefatigable, turbulent, bold, and discreet, with a capacity more comprehensive than just, he was capable both of undertaking and accomplishing the most dangerous enterprises. He paid little attention to the opinions of a world which he pretended to despise, and his passions acknowledged no restraint, because his heart was destitute alike of morality or principle. His mind was influenced by boundless ambition, a thirst for independence, a love of sway, and also by many noble, and all low, passions. He was a wolf held by a golden chain; but that chain was in the hand of Catherine.

## CHAPTER XL.

CATHERINE, INTENT ON THE FURTHER DISMEMBERMENT OF POLAND, DECLARES WAR AGAINST IT; SHE IS JOINED BY PRUSSIA; SECOND PARTITION OF POLAND; REVOLT OF THE POLES UNDER KOSCIUSKO; AUSTRIA LENDS HER ASSISTANCE TO CRUSH THE POLES; DEFEAT OF THE LATTER AT MACIEJOVICE; STORMING AND MASSACRE OF PRAGA UNDER SUWARROW; FINAL DIVISION OF POLAND, AND ITS EXTINCTION AS A NATION; CATHERINE PROMISES MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO THE FRENCH ROYALISTS; SHE CONCLUDES A NEW TREATY OF COMMERCE WITH ENGLAND, AND PREPARES TO ACT AGAINST THE FRENCH REPUBLIC; THE YOUNG KING OF SWEDEN ABRUPTLY BREAKS OFF A MATRIMONIAL ALLIANCE WITH ONE OF THE GRAND-DAUGHTERS OF CATHERINE; SHE ANNEXES COURLAND TO THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE, AND DIRECTS HER ARMS AGAINST PERSIA; DEATH OF THE EMPRESS; HER APPEARANCE AND CHARACTER.

CATHERINE was soon reconciled to the loss of Potemkin; and the business which had been under his direction she divided amongst her other ministers and her favourite, Plat



Zuboff. The second dismemberment of Poland is said to have been suggested by this person, and the idea was instantly sanctioned by the empress. Indeed, she was eager to punish the Poles for the constitution which they established in 1791—a constitution which abrogated the former one (dictated by violence in 1775), and afforded some prospect of a happy and stable government; if, indeed, such a thing could exist in Poland while the power of the state was in the hands of its own worthless nobles and priesthood. The Poles, also, had contracted an alliance with Prussia, in contempt of the aversion of the empress to such a measure, and in preference to one with her; and for this, also, she longed to exact vengeance.

She therefore, in 1792, declared war against Poland. The Poles received this ungenerous declaration with calmness, and prepared for their defence with enthusiasm; for they felt inspired with new life by every breeze which came from revolutionary Paris. But they were neither powerful nor united, and their troops soon fell back before the far more powerful armies of the empress. The plains of Poland were again drenched with blood; and, despite some advantages obtained by the army of that country, it was soon overwhelmed, and almost consumed. It was in this campaign that the subsequently illustrious patriot, Thaddeus Kosciusko, first rendered service to his country, though he had previously won some distinction by fighting with La Fayette for the purpose of obtaining the emancipation of America from the misgovernment of George III.

Catherine also fought with other weapons than the sword. Notwithstanding the coldness that existed between her and the king of Prussia, she opened a negotiation with him, and proposed the definite partition of Poland. In fact, she had contrived to reduce Frederic William to the alternative either of defending Poland against Russia, by virtue of his alliance with that state, or of making a second partition of it in conjunction with her. Frederic William chose the latter, and sent a body of Prussian troops into that country, 1,100 German square miles of which they immediately occupied. He had bound himself to assist the Poles, but he utterly deserted them in their extremity.

The gold of Russia also did its work among the corrupt Polish nobility; and

Stanislaus Augustus, still the slave of Catherine, was induced by her to make a public declaration, that it was necessary to yield to the superiority of the Russian arms. In 1793, the confederation of the partisans of Russia assembled at Grodno, where the Russian general seated himself under the canopy of the throne he was about to overthrow. Sievers, the Russian minister, also published a manifesto, in which he declared that his sovereign intended to incorporate with her domains all the territory of Poland which her arms had conquered. The Russian troops, by their ravages and depredations, struck terror into the Poles, and the defenders of the nation were compelled to disperse. The result was a second partition of Poland in 1793, by which Prussia took 22,500, Russia 83,000, and Poland retained 85,000 square miles.

For a short time this unhappy country was breathless and silent; but, maddened by so many calamities, the Poles resolved on a great effort to free themselves from Russian oppression. An extensive conspiracy was organised, and the revolution broke out in the spring of 1794, on the arrival of Kosciusko from Italy, where he had retired. Such was the confidence placed in him, that all ranks of the people hurried to join him, and ladies sold their jewels to furnish him with the means of sustaining the struggle. Oaths of obedience were taken to him, and he was invested with the full and absolute powers of a dictator. In conjunction with the national council, he issued proclamations enfranchising all the peasants, who had hitherto been serfs quite as much as their own class in Russia, and calling upon them to arm themselves as best they could, and to be ready to attack the enemies of their country, and of all national and personal liberty. The measure would have been a wise one, had it been adopted a century before. This had been prevented by the selfishness of the nobles; and now Poland was doomed because she had no PEOPLE—superstitious serfs denationalised by generations of bondage, and even ignorant of liberty; but no people in the sense in which that word is understood in free states. It was impossible at once to elevate the serfs of Poland to the dignity of citizens, or convert them into enthusiastic patriots. Many scarcely understood the advantages offered them; others truly thought that the benefit had been withheld until the hour when the noble and wealthy



classes found they could not do without them; and they doubted that the promises given in a season of danger, would be kept when the peril was past. For these reasons, the proclamation of enfranchisement produced but a very partial effect. Many of the serfs did indeed fight bravely in the conflict which succeeded, but these were mostly followers of the few patriot nobles. Many of the nobles, even in this hour of darkness, when the smitten nationality of Poland was staggering towards that steep precipice over which it was so soon to be hurled, were alarmed and irritated at the proclamation; for they had ever bitterly opposed even a gradual emancipation, and still looked upon their serfs in the same light in which the owners of plantations regard their negro slaves. With a haughty, grasping, and worthless nobility, a bitterly intolerant priesthood, a brutalised sea of serf-life in lieu of a people, and scarcely any middle class, Poland had not in it the elements of national life. It was in a state to invite aggression and spoliation, and it fell in accordance with inevitable natural laws; laws which must eventually produce the annihilation even of British nationality, if the same fatal causes were at work in this empire.

At first success smiled upon Kosciusko, and he obtained a victory at Raslowice with 4,000 Poles (two-thirds of whom were armed only with scythes), over an equal number of efficiently-armed and disciplined Russian troops. The battle lasted for five hours; 3,000 of the Russian troops were killed, and eleven of their cannon taken. The revolt of Warsaw followed; and the troops of Russia and Prussia, after two days and nights of murderous street-fighting, were expelled from that city. The struggle lasted for several months, and the whole country was one vast arena of butchery and bloodshed. The troops of Russia and Prussia were assisted by those of Austria, the emperor of which power had at first held aloof; yet, notwithstanding the terrible inequality of the contest, they appeared unable to crush the patriots, who fought with the fury of enthusiasm for their national independence. In September, the savage dwarf, Suwarrow, arrived with another Russian army, resolved on terminating the struggle by striking some appalling blow.

Kosciusko, on receiving intelligence of the approach of Suwarrow, resolved, if possible, to prevent his junction with the other Russian forces under General Fersen. With

this object the patriot marched against the latter, and gave him battle, on the 10th of October, at Maciejowice. Kosciusko had about 21,000 men, undisciplined and half-armed. The Russians had about thrice that number of regular and practised troops, and a large park of artillery. The Poles, nevertheless, fought with great bravery, and the struggle was maintained for more than five hours; then their ammunition was exhausted, and the battle became a massacre. Nearly the whole of the Polish army was cut to pieces, or compelled to surrender. Kosciusko himself, after receiving three sabre wounds, and a thrust from a spear, dropped exhausted from his horse, exclaiming, "*Finis Poloniæ!*" For some time he lay in a state of insensibility amongst the dead. On his being recognised, some Cossacks, who had approached with the intention of plundering and stripping him, testified a rude respect and a generous feeling towards the fallen hero. Making a rude *brancard* with their lances, they placed him upon it, and carried him to General Fersen, who ordered his wounds to be attended to, and treated him and his comrades in misfortune with kindness. The empress Catherine acted less generously. As soon as Kosciusko was able to walk, he was removed to St. Petersburg, and there condemned, as a Lithuanian, and, consequently, presumed subject of Russia, to imprisonment for life—a harsh sentence, which was revoked on the death of the empress.

All who escaped from the battle-field, shut themselves, together with the remnant of the patriot forces, up in Praga, the eastern suburb of Warsaw—separated from that city by the Vistula, as the borough of Southwark is separated from the city of London by the Thames. Their numbers have been variously estimated from 15,000 to 26,000 men, and they had 104 pieces of heavy cannon, with which to defend the bridges of the Vistula and the approaches to the capital. The latter were not calculated to sustain a vigorous assault; and Suwarrow, on his arrival, surveyed them with a grim smile of anticipated triumph. His force consisted of 22,000 men and eighty-six field-pieces; but, as might have been anticipated from a general of so much decision, who held human life so cheaply, he resolved to assault at once, and carry the Polish lines at the point of the bayonet. "Let my children know," said Suwarrow to his officers (for "children" was the affectionate term which this strange man applied to his semi-savage troops), "that I



intend repeating Ismail here, and that without delay." The words were echoed from mouth to mouth, with ferocious glee, by the Russian soldiers, who understood the implied permission that, Praga once taken, they might give themselves up to a hideous revel of murder, lust, and plunder.

After cannonading the defences of Praga for two days, Suwarrow gave directions for the assault to take place at daybreak on the 3rd of November. As at Ismail, the signal was to be three cock-crows, given by the general himself, on which the attack was to commence, and no prisoners were to be made until all resistance had ceased. Notwithstanding the badly-armed state of the Polish troops, and their deficiency of ammunition, their trenches were not carried until after a desperate struggle of five hours' duration. Then the Russian infantry pressed forward, delivering close volleys of musketry, and sending an incessant storm of grape-shot from their cannon into the crowded suburb. Thus a road, running with blood, and strewn with mangled bodies, was made into its centre, towards which the attacking columns all converged. Suwarrow, impatient at the opposition, heightened the horror of the scene by ordering the wooden houses, of which Praga was for the most part built, to be set on fire. The result of these varied means of destruction was terrible indeed. It is estimated that 10,000 Polish soldiers, and no less than 12,000 citizens, of every age and sex, were shot, bayoneted, sabred, burnt or suffocated in the flames, or driven into, and drowned in, the Vistula. Happily, the end of the bridge over that river, which abutted upon Warsaw, broke down, and saved the city from the fate of Praga. But its unconditional surrender was inevitable, and followed in a few days. Suwarrow, on receiving the keys of the city from the principal magistrate, pressed them to his lips, and, with a glance towards that heaven whose edicts of mercy he had recently so terribly outraged, exclaimed, "I render thee thanks, Almighty God, that thou hast not exacted the same price for these keys as for the possession of Praga." The empress Catherine was so gratified with the successes of Suwarrow, that she made him a field-marshal, and gave him a staff of command, made of gold, with a wreath of jewels in the form of oak-leaves, the diamonds alone of which were valued at 60,000 roubles. To this she added the present of a large and valuable estate.

The following year (1795) witnessed the division of the remainder of Poland, between Russia, Prussia, and Austria; the last partition treaty being finally settled in October. By it Austria had Cracow, with the country between the Pilitza, the Vistula, and the Bug. Prussia had Warsaw, and the territory to the banks of the Niemen. All the rest—the lion's share—fell to Russia. Thus was Poland erased from the map of Europe, while England and France were passive spectators of a spoliation which, unjust as it was, affords room for many arguments of extenuation. The fate of the dismembered provinces differed according to the governments under which they fell. The Austrian yoke was the harshest; that of Prussia somewhat less so; but the advantages which the Polish subjects of this state enjoyed, were counterbalanced by a decided tendency to establish Germanism on the ruin of everything that was national. Russia's share of Poland was the best treated of the three: in it the national language was preserved in all official transactions, and an excellent system of public education introduced into the university of Vilna. Stanislaus Augustus, who had never been a king but in name, retired to the town of Grodno in Lithuania: he signed a formal abdication of a throne which really no longer existed. The three partitioning powers bestowed upon him a pension of 200,000 ducats, and also undertook to pay his debts. He afterwards removed to St. Petersburg, where he died in the month of February, 1798, about fifteen months after the death of the empress, of whom he had been the lover, the dupe, and the tool.

Catherine's treasury was too much exhausted by her war with the Ottomans to enable her to join in that for the suppression of the French revolution. She, however, induced her late enemy, Gustavus III. of Sweden, to do so, and subsidised him for that purpose. But the assassination of that monarch, on the 16th of March, 1792, arrested his project. French emigrants of distinction were now continually arriving at the court of St. Petersburg, where they applied for military aid, which, though the empress did not refuse, she considered it imprudent to grant. Indeed, though she gave a welcome reception to all the French who protested their attachment to their old form of government, she severely proscribed the rest, from an apprehension that the principles on which the revolution was effected



might find their way into Russia, and there occasion some combustion subversive of the throne. She even compelled all the French in her dominions to take an oath of allegiance to the Bourbon claimant of the crown of France, and to swear an eternal hatred to the republic. Those who refused to do so were expelled from the empire. But Catherine was far from being the only sovereign whom terror and astonishment at the execution of the unhappy Louis XVI., in 1793, drove to acts of intolerance and ungenerous severity.

Turning again towards England as she receded from France, Catherine, in the March of 1793, concluded a new treaty of commerce with this country; that which had expired in 1786 not having been renewed. At the same time she published a foolish edict, prohibiting the introduction of French merchandise into her dominions. Giving rein to her increasing animosity of revolutionary principles, she even promised to send a Russian squadron to co-operate with the English fleet, and she gave commands for the acceleration of the armament at Cronstadt. The progress of the republican armies of France, and the meteor-like successes of Napoleon, gave Catherine considerable anxiety, and Suwarrow constantly entreated her to send him against "the French atheists," as the merciless little monster called them. "That youngster goes too fast," he frequently observed, "and should be stopped at once. That would not be difficult for me and my children, if our lady-mother would give us leave."

On the death of Gustavus, he was succeeded by his eccentric and weak-minded son, then but in his fourteenth year. The youth of this arrogant boy, whose capricious humour eventually cost him his crown, rendered a regency necessary, and the affairs of government were placed in the hands of his uncle, the Duke of Sudermania. The latter arranged a marriage between the young king of Sweden and a princess of the house of Mecklenburg, apparently with the motive of avoiding an alliance with the imperial family of Russia. At this, Catherine expressed displeasure, and stated, that the late monarch had promised her the hand of his son for one of her grandchildren, the grand-duchesses. Some negotiations and intrigues were terminated by the acceptance

of an invitation by the young king and the regent to St. Petersburg. They arrived in the August of 1796. Catherine received them with great magnificence; and Gustavus Adolphus, captivated by the charms of the Grand-duchess Alexandra, consented to abandon his engagement with the Princess of Mecklenburg. Proposals were made and accepted, and the day was fixed for the ceremony of the espousals. But, on the contract being presented to the king for his signature, he refused to put his name to it, unless the princess previously changed her religion—a circumstance which, he said, the fundamental laws of Sweden obliged him to require. Neither solicitation nor flattery could induce him to forego a demand which, urged at such a moment, had the appearance of a studied insult. The empress then rose with dignity, and retired from the apartment, followed by Paul, the grand-duchess, and their children. So great was the impression made upon her by this indignity, that, on reaching her own apartment, it is said, she had a slight fit, the precursor of that which, so short a time afterwards, terminated fatally. The following day, Gustavus Adolphus and his retinue quitted St. Petersburg.

Even to the close of her life, Catherine continued to enlarge her dominions. In this year (1796) she contrived, by political intrigues, to annex the duchy of Courland to the Russian empire.\* Courland, like Poland, may be said to have had no people: they were no better than serfs; and the land was all in the possession of a selfish, petty, and domineering nobility. Their sovereign was Duke Peter Biren, son of the infamous man who, as the favourite of the weak empress Anna, so long tyrannised over Russia. Peter Biren was avaricious, litigious, and much disliked; and his people, availing themselves of his absence, made a formal surrender of their allegiance to the empress of Russia. This was accepted; and certainly the Courlanders lost nothing except a worthless prince. The acquisition of Courland was of great importance to Russia. It produces both corn and timber in abundance, and has several ports advantageously situated on the Baltic. That of Vindau, which is never obstructed by ice, might, by a little improvement, be

\* Courland, situated between the 56th and 58th degree of north latitude, is divided into three parts—Courland Proper, Semigallia, and the circle of Piltēn. It is bounded by Livonia, Lithuania, Samogitia,

and the Baltic. The Dwina parts it from Livonia on the north, and waters its frontiers for a space of more than sixty leagues. A glance at a map of Russia will show its immense importance to that empire.



rendered capable of containing a hundred ships of the line.

Age did not deprive the empress of her almost ceaseless activity. She now resolved to turn her arms against Persia, and, under pretence of defending Lolf-Ali-Khan, gain possession of those provinces of Persia which border on the Caspian. She endeavoured to draw in the Turkish government to second her design; but the divan wisely remained immovable. A Russian army, under the command of Valerian Zuboff (a brother of the favourite), advanced into Daghestan, and captured Derbent, but afterwards experienced a check at the hands of the Persians. Catherine sent reinforcements to Zuboff, and felt her usual confidence that success would soon attend him. Catherine, indeed, looked forward to a still greater triumph than any success over a crumbling state like Persia could afford. She had just concluded a treaty with England and with Austria, which was to secure to her the assistance of those two powers against Turkey; while she undertook to furnish them with an army of 65,000 men to act against the French republic. Thus she trusted that the last great act of her life would be the most gigantic and brilliant; no less, indeed, than the accomplishment of her cherished scheme of driving the Ottomans out of Europe, and placing one of the imperial family on the throne of Constantinople. But to have realised all her ambitious projects, this extraordinary woman must have been immortal; for she had also addressed herself to humble the power and haughty conduct of the French republic.\* Death, however, is a revolutionist that has no respect even for the most powerful and illustrious of monarchs.

The empress had been unwell for several days; but, on the evening of the 15th of November, she was in unusual spirits, amused

herself with her buffoon, and rallied him upon the dread he was known to entertain of death. However, she retired to her chamber rather earlier than usual, saying, that too much laughing had given her slight symptoms of colic. The following morning she rose in good spirits, and took her usual breakfast. Afterwards she went to her closet, where she staid an unusual time. The women who waited upon her at length became alarmed, and, opening the door, they found their mistress in a state of insensibility. Medical aid was immediately sent for, but three-quarters of an hour elapsed before the arrival of her chief physician, Dr. Robertson. That gentleman, considering her to be suffering from the effect of a fit of apoplexy, caused her to be twice bled. The operation restored her to partial consciousness, but she never spoke again. In this state of torpor she remained until the following evening, when, between nine and ten o'clock, she expired so gently, that the physicians were not aware of the moment of her death. Paul, who was absent from St. Petersburg, did not arrive until the evening when she died; the empress still breathed, but she did not appear conscious of his presence. It has been surmised—but, we think, without sufficient authority—that, had she been conscious in her last moments, she would have disinherited Paul, and bequeathed the throne to one of her grandchildren. The empress died in the sixty-seventh year of her age, and the thirty-fourth of her reign.

Catherine had been handsome in her youth, but she got corpulent as she advanced in years, though she preserved an air of gracefulness, mingled with dignity, to the latest period of her life. In person she was not above the middle size; but as she was well-proportioned, and carried her head high, she had the appearance of being tall.

\* It was the policy of the empress, who detested the French republic without loving the Austrians, to let both parties exhaust themselves; determined, however, whatever might be the fate of their arms, to prevent either from acquiring an uncontrolled sway in Germany. Orders were issued for a levy of 150,000 troops, destined to act, in some shape or other, for the relief of the emperor of Germany. It has been questioned, whether it would not have been wiser policy in Catherine to have moved for the assistance of the confederates sooner? She, perhaps, entertained a persuasion, that the allies would stand firm together, and make a more successful opposition to the republic. She was, no doubt, well enough pleased to see almost all the other powers of Europe weaken themselves by war; whilst, at the

same time, it must have been her intention, as has since appeared, to interfere more and more in the general conflict, in proportion as the party she detested gained ground on a sovereign prince; who, though a neighbour and an ancient enemy, yet possessed an hereditary throne, and had ceased to be a formidable rival. It is to be considered farther, that had she moved sooner, the Turks, on the other side, instigated by French intrigues, might have moved also. The empress waited, too, until she should secure peace, on the most formidable frontier, by a marriage between her grand-daughter and the young king of Sweden; an object which she had much at heart, though it was found impossible to accomplish it without a concession to that headstrong boy, inconsistent with the dignity of the Russian empire.



She had a bold, expansive forehead, an aquiline nose, an agreeably-shaped mouth, and a chin which, though too long for beauty, was not displeasing. She had a profusion of auburn hair, in which she took great delight; and her eye-brows were dark and thick. Her eyes were generally said to be blue, though some observers have affirmed them to be brown, and others gray. They sometimes expressed a feeling of gentleness, though that was frequently displaced by one of pride and haughtiness. Though her face was by no means deficient in expression, yet she had such a command over her features, that no one could discover, from gazing upon them, what was passing in her mind.

The empress, on all public occasions, dressed with great magnificence, and wore a profusion of jewellery, especially diamonds, of which gems she was particularly fond, and possessed a prodigious number. In general, she usually dressed after the ancient Russian fashion, for the most part wearing green, out of compliment to the nation. Her hair, slightly powdered, flowed down upon her shoulders, and was topped with a small cap, covered with diamonds. She wore rouge, after the fashion of the ladies of the French court; and in the latter part of her life she put on a great deal, in order to prevent the ravages of time from being visible on her face. She was always strictly temperate with respect to the pleasures of the table, and that at a court where a little deviation would not have given occasion to much scandal. A slight breakfast, a moderate dinner, and two or three glasses of wine, constituted her usual diet. Supper she never indulged in.

The personal vices of Catherine have not been able to obscure her glory as a ruler, or do more than faintly sully her greatness. A modern historian, who certainly will not be suspected of any undue lenity towards crime or immorality, has observed of her, that "few sovereigns will occupy a more conspicuous place in the page of history, or have left in their conduct on the throne a more exalted reputation."\* After the death of Frederic the Great, Catherine remained the most illustrious among the crowned heads of Europe, and even towered amongst them as an empress among petty princes. She had the ambition to aim at any object, however lofty; the courage to attempt its accomplishment, however difficult or dan-

gerous; and the perseverance and genius usually to succeed in it. She devoted herself to the civilisation of her subjects, by means more gentle and gradual than those employed by Peter the Great, and, consequently, more effectual. It has been said that she effected much real, and more seeming good; and, doubtless, many of her actions had a meretricious glare about them, which, when it had attracted popularity, or created a sensation, proved of no further value. Catherine loved to dazzle her people with the gorgeous display of that vast power which she knew so well how to grasp and direct. But she was not content to stay at this point; and her mind was frequently directed to raising her subjects in the social scale, and to conferring upon them substantial benefits. She did much for education, much towards a better administration of the law, and much for the advancement of art and science. She even attempted to emancipate the serfs of the empire; and though prevented, by the interests or prejudices of her nobles, from accomplishing this great measure, she succeeded in ameliorating their condition. She has been rightly called the great regenerator of Russia after Peter the Great, and she had the good fortune to labour under more favourable circumstances.

Attached to literature, Catherine was herself an authoress. It has been urged, that her works could scarcely be of much value, or they would be more generally sought for than is now the case. The argument is a fallacious one; for distinction is not always the reward of merit; and in the great arena of letters and of genius, both prince and peasant stand almost upon level ground. We have had many royal authors in England; but their works are seldom read now, except by curious scholars and antiquarians. Every person in this country, of any pretension to education, is more or less familiar with the writings of Shakspeare; but the pedantic bombast of James I. appeals to posterity in vain. The works of Catherine, moreover, with the exception of the famous *Instructions*, were of an unambitious kind. They chiefly consisted of dramatic pieces, written in the Russian language; and tales, penned with the object of instilling moral principles into her grandchildren. Her published letters to Voltaire are considered to exhibit more grace and playfulness of style than those which that distinguished philosopher addressed to her.

\* Alison.—*History of Europe*.



We do not infer that her ability in this direction was great, but we conclude that it was more than respectable. Had she been less illustrious as an empress, she might have been more regarded as an authoress. As it was, the gorgeous and glowing brilliance of her jewelled sceptre eclipsed the feeble radiance of her pen. Her detractors have affirmed, that she merely coquetted with literature, and that it made no advances during her reign. That she gathered a reflected glory from the association of her name with those of the gifted amongst men, and that to do so constituted one of the motives which induced her to shower gifts and smiles upon them, is no dishonour to her. We are scarcely justified in expecting a higher or more critical motive than this from any monarch whose time was largely occupied with the highly responsible duties inseparable from the active administration of the affairs of an extensive empire. The remainder of the sneer is a falsehood, designed to utter that bitterness which some writers lose no opportunity of expressing towards Catherine personally, and towards the Russian policy and people generally. Russian literature scarcely existed prior to her time, during which it made as much progress as could reasonably be anticipated in a nation not of a studious or literary tone of mind, and in the higher ranks of which, military accomplishments were those mostly, if not almost entirely, regarded.

\* "Both Anna and Elizabeth prosecuted expensive wars, and executed many costly public works, without bequeathing to their successors any national debt. The outlay of Catherine on wars, colonies, charitable, industrial and educational foundations, besides the lavish pomp and extravagant splendour of her court, could not have been sustained without a still greater levy on the country. It is true that she remitted many duties and taxes; that she abolished some of the ancient farms, and even a few of the rich monopolies that had been enjoyed by the crown; but, on the other hand, her empire obtained vast accessions of wealth during her reign. The channels through which they were procured may be thus enumerated: annexations by conquest; the extension and encouragement of commerce; the reduction of the property of the church, the bishops, and the monasteries, by which the crown obtained a great number of boors, large tracts of forests and productive lands, and several valuable mines and works, that had previously been rendered lucrative by the enterprise of the clergy; by the introduction of the *obrok*; by bestowing greater care and more vigilant superintendence upon the mines; the establishment of new duties; the diffusion of the poll-tax over provinces that had hitherto been exempt from its operation; and by a variety of reforms in the collection of the revenue. In this respect, Catherine

Of Catherine's generosity to literary men, we have recorded several instances. She was a great promoter of the arts, both useful and elegant; even of music, which, personally, she almost disliked, being sometimes unable to bear the noise of a large orchestra. Great numbers of valuable pictures were purchased by her, including the Houghton collection from England—a circumstance which, while it added to her glory, disgraced this nation in the estimation of foreigners. She was, indeed, in every respect generous, even to a lavish prodigality—at once a grace and a fault; but of which all that is reprehensible may be easily forgiven in a great potentate; the more so in her case, as she doubled, if she did not even treble, the revenues of the empire.\* Nor, while speaking of her virtues, must we forget that she was magnanimous, and could readily forgive. During a portion of her reign, Russia was the only country in Europe in which French newspapers were not prohibited; but the *Moniteur* having taken great liberties with her name, and spoken with unflattering plainness of the Grand-duke Paul, she desired it should not be circulated in future until it had been submitted to her inspection. Shortly afterwards, she found a paragraph in it, which described her as the Messalina of the North; yet, instead of being offended, she remarked, that as it concerned only herself, it might be distributed. Certainly this magnanimity

may be regarded as the first sovereign of Russia who brought to the fiscal department the advantages of decision, system, and activity. The Gotha calendar of 1790, estimates the annual revenue at £35,000,000; an amount that has been adopted, from that work, in several subsequent statistical publications. Mr. Coxe, whose general accuracy entitles his opinions to be received with respect, calculates the net income at nearly £42,000,000. At the same time, he expresses some surprise how the empress could have maintained, by resources comparatively so limited, the munificence and pageantries of her court. In the last edition of Lévêsqués history, the annual revenue is estimated at £47,114,084, by the continuators of that work. Tooke exhibits an elaborate view of the various items of finance, and sums up the whole at upwards of £46,000,000; expressing, at the same time, his belief that it amounted to still more; and stating that, by another calculation which he had made, he brought the total to £48,000,000. From these contradictory speculations, it will be evident that the means of furnishing an authentic table of the revenues of Russia do not exist."—Lardner's *Cyclopædia*. We have no recent return of the revenue of Russia, but it is now estimated at about 400,000,000 silver roubles; 45,300,097 of which are derived from the domains of the crown. The debt was, in 1853, 788,573,112 silver roubles.



was not invariable: she was at times guilty of acts of tyranny; and, on one occasion, banished an accomplished Russian gentleman to Siberia, because he had written a pamphlet against despotism. This, however, was a matter which excited but little surprise in Russia, and was not considered a stretch of imperial power. Catherine's motive was, doubtless, entirely passionless and political, for she was above most of the prejudices of her time and nation. She always encouraged liberal institutions, until the wild extravagances and revolting murders of the revolutionists in Paris, created in her that natural alarm which was felt, more or less, by all the princes and nobles of Europe. Of Catherine's comprehensive toleration in matters of religion we have already spoken.

The vices of the empress Catherine were many. Though far from being cruel (for she was, in most respects, a mild and forgiving sovereign), yet she was resolute to crush her enemies, or those who might become so. All who had the misfortune to stand between her and the imperial sceptre, perished. The shades of Peter and of Ivan will ever rest like dark and accusing visions over her tomb. In neither case can the act of murder be traced to her command; but she alone profited by their deaths. It has been urged, in extenuation (though, in this instance, the plea is not a very potent one), that she consented to the assassination of her husband on the principle of self-defence. However it may be viewed, the deed was a shocking, and, if performed at her command, an infamous one. A profound dissimulation must be ranked among her vices, though she used it rather in political transactions than in social intercourse; indeed, in the latter, she was often most open, unrestrained, and genial. Yet she was a perfect mistress of artifice when she desired to employ it.

Catherine's licentiousness was gigantic and unbounded; and were we writing merely as moralists, could not be too strongly condemned. But on the broader and more worldly view the historian is compelled to take, it must be remembered, that her vices in this respect were personal, and did not necessarily affect the condition or morals of her subjects. Whether they actually did so or not, has been both

affirmed and denied. Some writers have accused her of setting an example of debauchery which was almost universally followed. This is scarcely true. The Russian court was extremely dissolute when Catherine ascended the throne; and though some ladies of rank probably imitated the empress in keeping favourites and lovers, yet, as we have shown, Catherine was offended by any display of immorality, or even want of decorous reserve in matters of gallantry, and appeared desirous, by an external austerity of manners, to make up, in some degree, for the depravity of her private actions. Many scandalous stories are circulated respecting her and her confidants, but these are unquestionably gross exaggerations in some cases, and impure inventions in others. It has been well observed on this point, that "it is an invidious thing to pry, with too much curiosity, into the frailties of such a character. The severest critic has not been able to charge her with anything unnatural, or, in her predicament and situation, not easily to be forgiven."\*

We will conclude this estimate of an extraordinary character with a few lines, which are not only happily expressed, but probably possess more of authority than our own words. "No personage in our own times has attracted a greater share of censure and eulogium than Catherine; and no woman, in any age, ever exhibited more of the masculine greatness of one sex, and the feminine weakness of another. As a woman, she appears, at times, the slave of passions, and the puppet of her courtiers; but while we behold her diminishing, in this point of view, into insignificance, we look again, and contemplate the *sovereign*, towering like an immense colossus; and with one foot placed on Cherson, and another at Kamtschatka, waving her iron sceptre over the subject nations, and regulating the destiny of a large portion of mankind.

"The frailties, however, of the woman will soon be forgotten, while the glory that encircles the brows of the legistrix and conqueror, will long continue to dazzle the eyes of an admiring world. The present age, however, shudders at the untimely fate of Peter and Ivan; and posterity will not easily pardon the degradation of Stanislaus, the partition of Poland, and the massacres of Ismail and of Praga."†

the remembrance of the events to which he alludes was still strong in the public mind of Europe. More gigantic incidents have since rather obscured them.

\* *Annual Register* for 1796.

† *Encyclopædia Britannica*. By the *present* age the writer means the early part of this century, when



## CHAPTER XLI.

DOUBTFUL PARENTAGE OF PAUL; HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE; HIS ACCESSION; HE INSULTS THE MEMORY OF CATHERINE, AND CAUSES THE COFFIN OF PETER III. TO BE EXHUMED AND CROWNED; PAUL ANNOUNCES HIS INTENTION OF PURSUING A PACIFIC POLICY; HE RELEASES KOSCIUSKO AND OTHER POLISH PATRIOTS FROM CONFINEMENT; HE RESTRAINS THE DANGEROUS POWER OF THE GUARDS; HIS DESPOTIC CONDUCT TOWARDS THE OFFICERS WHO RETIRE; HIS ECCENTRICITIES AND PETTY CRUELTY; HE DISMISSES THE FAVOURITES OF THE LATE EMPRESS; PROHIBITS THE USE OF ROUND HATS, AND PUNISHES THE WEARERS OF THEM; FORBIDS THE HARNESSING OF HORSES IN THE RUSSIAN FASHION; REVIVES THE BARBAROUS CUSTOM OF PROSTRATION BEFORE THE EMPEROR; PAUL'S IRRITATING INTERFERENCE WITH THE ARMY AND WITH THE TRIBUNALS OF THE EMPIRE; HIS CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS, AND FINANCIAL EXPERIMENTS.

PAUL, when he ascended the throne, was forty-two years of age. Catherine, who never exhibited towards him the affection of a parent, kept him during her life under restraint, and in comparative retirement. This, doubtless, arose chiefly from a feeling of jealousy on her part towards one who was to succeed, and who might, by the disaffected, be made an instrument to dethrone her. Such an emotion is common amongst monarchs, and was entertained by each of the first three of our four Georges. But this was not the only cause of Catherine's dislike for Paul. That he was the son of Peter III. is highly questionable; and some doubt exists as to whether he was even the son of Catherine. We have alluded to the natural disqualification under which Peter suffered; and this, joined to the facts that Paul was not born until between eight and nine years after the marriage of his presumed parents, nor until after it was notorious that Catherine had violated the fidelity of the marriage vow; also that Peter, though he indulged in many amours, had no son by any other woman—gives rise to more than a suspicion (indeed, a strong probability), that Paul was not, on his father's side, a scion of the imperial family.

The supposition that Paul was not the son of Catherine, though not without an appearance of probability, rests on a more unsure ground; upon conjectures, and not upon evidence. It was suspected by many persons, that he was one of the children of the empress Elizabeth, and of her secret husband Rasumoffski, or some other favourite less known to the world. This belief received some colouring from the mean appearance and Tartar cast of the features and figure of Paul. Others, again, have represented him as a Finnish foundling, adopted by Catherine from political motives, and, therefore, in no way connected by blood with the imperial family: we are not,

however, aware that this suggestion rests upon any authority of a kind to entitle it to credence. Neither can we place much reliance upon the general law of the hereditary transmission of appearance or character from parent to child, simply because it is general and not universal, but admits, indeed, of constant exceptions. If we could, Paul's claim to be the son of Catherine must not be admitted. Diminutive in his figure, extremely ugly in his features, having a pug or turned-up nose, and a smirking air which struggled strongly with an expression of a sense of self-importance and arrogance, so great as to amount to disease—narrow in his capacity, and petty in his views and habits, he was as wide a contrast to the handsome, strong-minded, and commanding Catherine, as it was possible to conceive. But as this matter is rather speculative than historical, we will not pursue it further than to add, that the empress's strong dislike of Paul, has been regarded by some as tending to prove that he was her child by her husband Peter, and that the natural repugnance she bore to the father, descended to his offspring. For reasons above stated, we place no dependence on this conjecture.

Catherine had frequently expressed an unfavourable opinion of Paul's judgment and disposition; and, indeed (as the reader will presently see), she must have been strangely partial had this not been the case. We have already referred to the common belief, that she would have disinherited him had she been able to do so. Certainly, her conduct towards him had made his temper even more sour and splenetic than it was by nature. Though the empress was prodigally liberal to all her favourites, and to those who deserved reward at the hands of the state, yet she restrained Paul to an allowance less than the income of many an untitled English gentleman. She also ex-



cluded the grand-duke from all participation in public affairs, kept him at a distance from the court, and surrounded him with spies. She even took away his children from the time of their birth, and had them brought up beneath her care, as if she considered it improper to trust their education to a person of such mean capacities as their father. Sometimes the grand-duke and the grand-duchess were not permitted to see their children for months; and it appeared as if the empress desired to alienate their affections from their parents. We cannot be surprised that such conduct, prolonged over a period of years, made Paul reciprocate the dislike with which he was regarded by his mother. Hints were several times given to him, that a strong party only wanted his sanction to bring about a revolution which should dethrone the empress, and place the imperial sceptre in his hand. Paul did not encourage them; but it is presumed (and we think justly so), not from a respect for the empress, but from a dread of the danger of failure.

Immediately upon the death of Catherine, Paul was recognised as emperor. With a politic and dramatic flattery, his wife was the first who paid him homage as sovereign, though he had never treated her with that affection which a woman naturally expects at the hands of her husband. She and her children knelt at his feet and saluted him as their emperor directly it was known that the great Catherine had breathed her last. Paul raised and embraced them. On the partner of his comparative obscurity he shortly afterwards bestowed a princely revenue; while to each of his sons he gave the command of a regiment of the guards, and appointed the eldest to the important post of military governor of St. Petersburg. Less than a century before, Peter the Great denounced the practice of conferring high places upon inexperienced individuals, and set the example, in his own person, of rendering service and merits the only passports to offices of responsibility; but Paul fell at once into those vices of old governments from which Peter sternly held aloof, and Catherine but seldom committed.

Paul experienced no opposition in ascending the throne. After his wife had rendered him homage, the chief officers of the different departments, and of the army, did the same, and took the customary oath of allegiance. This example was followed by the soldiery; and the next day Paul was

everywhere proclaimed emperor, and his eldest son (Alexander) czarévitch, or heir-presumptive to the throne.

For a short time, the new monarch suppressed the cynical and capricious bitterness which years of restraint, acting upon a mean nature, had engendered. He behaved with apparent cordiality to Plato Zuboff, the lover and one of the chief ministers of the late empress. He retained the favourite in his offices, and even thanked him for the attachment he had shown to his mother. The other ministers, and the heads of the different departments, were also confirmed in their posts, and some of them were even promoted. This was done to secure them to his interests; but he acted in a very different manner as soon as he knew himself strong enough to do without them. For some years he had drawn up a number of regulations with respect to the future direction of the succession to the crown. These he now produced, and caused to be invested with the power of law.

Paul's next step was one which appears to have given to his perverse and splenetic nature a feeling of intense satisfaction. He resorted to every means possible, without doing violence to public decorum, of casting contempt upon the grave of Catherine, and of bringing to remembrance the darkest blot upon her character. Every circumstance connected with her funeral he took under his own immediate direction. The bones of his assumed father he caused to be removed from the obscure grave in the convent of Alexander Nevski, where they had lain for nearly five-and-thirty years. When the coffin was opened, Paul wept over the remains of the murdered emperor; and, perhaps, on this solemn occasion, there might have been something of sincerity in the tears he shed over the bones of one whom he, at least, doubtless believed to be the immediate author of his being. After this display of emotion, he caused the coffin to be conveyed to the palace with extraordinary pomp, and placed in a temple constructed for the purpose, side by side with the corpse of Catherine, which was then lying in state. Then the coffin containing the dust of Peter was solemnly crowned; for the living emperor had been hurled from the throne before he had undergone that ceremony. As if in sardonic mockery of the terms on which Catherine and Peter had lived together during the period of



their unhappy marriage, their coffins were linked together with a kind of true-love knot, bearing, in the Russian language, the inscription—"Divided in life; united in death." Enormous crowds of people were admitted to behold this grand and semi-theatrical scene, and to kiss the coffin of Peter and the cold hand of Catherine. She had been badly embalmed; it has even been said purposely so, by order of Paul. Certainly, the result was such as might have gratified a petty malignity. The empress was so disfigured, as not only to be scarcely recognised by those who had only seen her in public, but her remains had become so far subject to corruption, as to inspire disgust, if not horror, in those who approached them. Her face was swelled, much discoloured, and not in a state fit for public exhibition, while her hands were blue and yellow.

Paul thus punished the dead empress for any share she might have had in his reputed father's death. The revenge he took upon the actual murderers was remarkably eccentric. Count Alexis Orloff and Prince Baratinski were immediately, on the death of Catherine, commanded to repair to St. Petersburg, and assist in the funeral by bearing the pall which covered the remains of the emperor Peter. For three hours they were compelled to remain, one on each side of the coffin, in the presence of the assembled court. During this period the countenance of the iron-nerved Orloff exhibited signs of the mental agony he endured; but it is probable that this arose as much from fear as from remorse, as the regicide doubtless anticipated that this would be but the beginning of his punishment. He, however, bore up during the ceremony, and was then dismissed with a *permission* to travel abroad. This he immediately availed himself of, and left St. Petersburg for Germany, from which he did not return until after the death of Paul. Prince Baratinski, whose nerves were not so strong, nor his sensibility so blunt, as that of the coarse, large-limbed Orloff, suffered intensely during the funeral ceremony of the unfortunate monarch whom, five-and-thirty years ago, he had assisted to murder. There must, indeed, have been something strangely terrible to a guilty conscience, in the scene in which he was compelled to be a principal actor. The black hangings, the sombre plumes, the subdued and spectral-looking light of the tapers; the almost painful silence, broken only occa-

sionally by the wailing chant of a dirge for the dead; the oppressiveness of the air which such grim, charnel-house pageantry seems to produce on the awed spectator; and, above all, the presence of the mouldering bones of the wretched victim, who seemed as if he had risen from his obscure grave to point out his murderers to public execration—must have fallen, cold and sickening, almost like a sentence of death, upon those scared assassins. Baratinski fainted under the infliction of this wild punishment, and was only enabled to remain in his position during the ceremony, by the frequent application of volatile salts and other stimulants. He was not subjected to any other punishment further than what was contained in the information that his presence at court was no longer necessary.

The Princess Daschkaw was not forgotten by the Emperor Paul. She was commanded to retire to her estate at Novgorod, "and reflect on the events of 1762." As the village which was assigned her for a residence in her exile, was only a collection of cabins, she suffered considerable hardship until her friends procured her partial pardon, and permission to live at Serpukh, in the neighbourhood of Moscow, where she resided till her death on the 4th of January, 1810. It would have been more politic had Paul appeared to have forgotten the past; for these proceedings excited more surprise than sympathy at St. Petersburg. It was believed that his conduct was less a tribute of love to the memory of his father, than a reproach to the memory of his mother. He, however, sought out and loaded with favours several old officers who, in 1762, had opposed the revolution, and retained their allegiance to the unhappy Peter. One of them, the aged Baron Sternberg, who had long renounced all interest in the affairs of state, was made general-in-chief, and invested by the emperor with the riband of St. Alexander. "See," said he to the veteran, as he directed the attention of the latter to a picture of Peter III., which had been placed in the chamber, "I will have him to witness my gratitude towards his faithful friend."

An unfavourable opinion had been generally entertained of the character of the new emperor; but he at first adopted several measures which raised him in the popular estimation, and excited hopes that his mind was not so narrow, and his nature so morose, as had been commonly supposed. He issued a ukase, announcing a pacific policy—a cir-



cumstance which created great joy amongst the people; for the interests of Russia required repose after the great military disbursements of the preceding reign. This ukase also annulled a command given by Catherine, shortly before her death, to raise a body of recruits, in the proportion of one peasant in every hundred. Such an escape from the severities of military service, which is regarded with detestation by the great mass of the Russian peasants, was hailed by them with delight. It was also extremely acceptable to the nobility, whose interests would have suffered by the intended conscription.

Paul also went in person to release the unfortunate Polish patriot Kosciusko, who was in confinement at St. Petersburg, still suffering severely from the effect of his wounds, and the despondency resulting, in his imaginative nature, from the ruin of his country. Respect for his high personal character had caused the rigours of imprisonment to be dispensed with in his case. Thus, while his fellow-prisoners were closely confined in the dismal castle of Schlussemburg, or in the fortress of the capital, he was permitted to live at the house of Count Anhalt, in which apartments were assigned to him, together with an officer who acted as his guard. Paul appears to have been moved by the appearance of the unfortunate patriot, who, pale and attenuated, and with his head still wrapped in bandages, presented a pitiable appearance. He treated him kindly, and offered him an estate in Russia, with a number of peasants upon it. This was declined by Kosciusko, who accepted, instead, a sufficient sum of money to carry him to America, and make a provision there for the remainder of his life. All the companions of Kosciusko were likewise set at liberty. These generous acts made a great impression upon the people, who regarded them as evidences of a noble nature, which had previously been restrained from following out its natural bias. They were deceived; Paul was magnanimous for the moment, either from caprice, or a desire to act in all things contrary to the will of his illustrious predecessor.

For the first few days of his reign, Paul almost hourly announced some beneficial change, decreed some just punishment, or awarded some merited favour. The guards, who for several reigns had been the acting power in every revolution, and had bestowed the sceptre on those whom they pleased to

favour, he resolved to place under strong restraint. They had been the military despots of the court; and it was through their influence that Peter III. was hurled from the throne. In fact, they had long held a position in the capital which kept the sovereign in a state of comparative fear. Paul was well aware of the power they possessed, and of the difficulty of openly disbanding them. He therefore incorporated into the different regiments of guards the battalions that had served under him at Gatchina, promoting the officers two or three steps, and dispersing them so freely through the corps of St. Petersburg, as, by the force of numbers, to absorb the influence of the old companies. By this means the guards were unable to combine for the purpose of conspiracy; and many of their regiments were under the command of men who owed their appointment to the emperor. Another result followed. The old officers of the guard—most of whom were connected with the first families of the empire—were incensed at finding juniors of plebeian extraction, who, in some cases, had but a short time before served in the ranks, suddenly promoted over their heads. Irritated, also, by the novel and harassing discipline to which they were subjected, the wealthy threw up their commissions, and the remainder sullenly submitted to what they could not resist.

The emperor was annoyed at the withdrawal of several hundred officers into private life; and probably felt some alarm at the extent of the disaffection. His despotic character instantly showed itself. He went in person to the barracks, and, after making many encouraging promises to those who remained at their posts, he expressed his determination to exclude from all civil or military employment every officer who had retired, or who should do so. Not satisfied with this severity, he commanded all officers or subalterns who had left the guards, or might subsequently do so, to quit St. Petersburg at once. In the execution of this tyrannical decree, many persons were taken from their beds, and at once expelled from the city; some nearly destitute of clothing, and all of them without any provision for the future. Several of these unfortunate men perished from exposure to cold and want.

Paul speedily cast away the little popularity which he had gained by the early acts of his reign. He had no talent for decep-



tion, and apparently but little desire to practise it. He soon trampled beneath his feet the mask of generosity and a mild rule which, at his accession, he seemed disposed to wear. Irritable, peevish, and arrogant, he was restless and miserable himself, and therefore resolved that all around him should be so likewise. He has been frequently pronounced insane; and though we do not rest absolutely in that conclusion (for he appears to have understood the nature of his conduct sufficiently for him to be held accountable for it), yet it is difficult to consider him as the possessor of a brain untouched by disease. Masson\* thus attempts to depict, or rather illustrate, his character:—"The sovereign whom Paul appears to have chosen for his model is Frederic William, father of the great king of Prussia. The same austerity of manners, and the same passion for soldiers, are found in the Russian autocrat. For the rest, I have drawn, I conceive, the character of Paul in relating his actions; if not, the task, I confess, is above my powers. It is well known, that nothing is so difficult to paint as an infant, whose physiognomy is as yet unsettled; and it is the same with the character of an eccentric man. The most favourable plea we can make for him is, that the light of the French revolution had touched his brain and disordered his intellect. It had already disturbed the much stronger head of his mother. It is said, that the people of Paris, crowding to see Paul (then a youth), cried, 'My God, how ugly he is!' and that he had the good sense to laugh at it. He has not improved since he has grown old, bald, and wrinkled. The empress appears, by his side, like one of those beautiful women who are painted with a little deformed blackamoor near them, as a contrast to their dignity and grace. The singularity which he affects in his dress, and the severity of his manners, add greatly to his deformity. Without excepting even the Calmucks and the Kirghises, Paul is the ugliest man in his extensive dominions; and he himself considers his countenance as so shocking, that he dares not impress it upon his coin.

"I shall here subjoin some traits, which will serve to describe Paul by his own actions; and will prove, that when grand-

\* *Mémoires Secretes*, &c. It will be observed, that this sketch was penned during the life of the emperor, and by one who had ample opportunities of observing him.

duke, he announced what we have seen of him since his accession.

"Near his castle of Pavlofski he had a terrace, from which he could see all the sentinels, whom he delighted to station about him wherever there was room for a sentry-box. On this covered terrace he spent a part of each day, and observed, with a spy-glass, all that was passing about him. Often he sent a servant to a sentinel, to order him to button or unbutton a little more of his coat, to keep his musket higher or lower, to walk at a greater or less distance from his sentry-box. Sometimes he would go himself nearly half a mile to give these important orders, and would cane the soldier, or put a rouble into his pocket, according as he was angry or pleased with him.

"Pavlofski was an open village; yet guards were appointed, who wrote down the names of all who entered or went out of it; and who were obliged to tell whence they came, whither they were going, or what they wanted. Every evening each house was visited, to learn if there were any strangers there. Every man who wore a round hat, or had a dog with him, was arrested. The village, which had been much frequented because of its beautiful situation, soon became a desert; many persons turned out of their way to avoid it: and when Paul was perceived at a distance, he was carefully shunned. These circumstances increased his displeasure and suspicions, and he often caused the persons who thus sought to avoid him to be pursued and questioned.

"One day he put all the officers of his battalion under arrest, because they had saluted him awkwardly in filing off after their drill; and he ordered them to be called out, for eight days successively, to file off and salute before him, sending them regularly back to the guard-house till they were able to perform according to his fancy.

"As he was one day exercising his regiment of cuirassiers, the horse of an officer threw him. Paul ran furiously towards him, crying, 'Get up, rascal!' 'Your highness, I cannot, I have broken my leg.' Paul spat upon him, and retired swearing.

"Passing, at another time, unexpectedly and secretly by one of his guard-houses, the officer, not knowing him, did not order out his men; upon which he instantly turned back, boxed the ears of the officer, and ordered him to be disarmed and put under arrest.



"One day, travelling from Tzarsko-selo to Gatchina, the road to which was in the middle of a marshy forest, he suddenly recollected something, and ordered the coachman to return. 'Presently, your highness,' said the coachman; 'the road is here too narrow.' 'How, rascal!' cried Paul, 'won't you turn immediately?' The coachman, instead of answering, hastened to a spot where it was possible to comply. Paul, however, called to his equerry, and ordered him to arrest and punish the rebellious coachman. The equerry assured him that he would turn in a moment. Paul flew into a passion with the equerry also. 'You are a pitiful scoundrel like himself,' said he. 'Let him overturn the carriage; let him break my neck; but let him obey me, and turn the instant I command him.' During this dispute the coachman succeeded in turning; but Paul had him chastised on the spot.

"Since his accession, one of his horses stumbled with him in one of the streets of St. Petersburg. He alighted immediately, held a sort of council with his attendants, and the horse was condemned to receive fifty lashes with a whip. Paul caused them to be given on the spot, before the populace, and himself counted the strokes, saying, 'There, sir, that is for having stumbled with the emperor.'"

The new czar had, immediately upon his accession, behaved with kindness to Plato Zuboff, and confirmed him in the various offices he held. Shortly afterwards Paul sealed up his papers, and dismissed him from the court with contemptuous abruptness. The corrupt conduct of the favourite deserved punishment; but the emperor, by his previous cordiality, had expressed an implied forgiveness of all that was past. For some time the springs of the Russian government had been chiefly in the hands of Zuboff, who perverted them for the purposes of self-interest. He promoted the war in Persia, with the double object of enriching himself by plundering the army, and conferring a lucrative command upon his brother. All offices of state he conferred upon his parasites, his favourites, or his family. His father he elevated to the office of a judge; and had the shameless audacity to turn the appointment to account by buying up all the old causes in the court, and then obtaining decisions in his own favour. In addition to this, he had exercised the most arrogant tyranny over the

oldest generals and counsellors of the empire. Such a man deserved degradation and punishment; but Paul's conduct had, in fact, exonerated him. The dread of being charged with inconsistency, never curbed the acts or eccentricities of the emperor. Zuboff's secretaries were banished, the officers of his suite dispersed in different corps throughout the empire, and he himself commanded to quit Russia. This severity towards the favourite was not attributed to any desire on the part of the emperor to punish corruption, but to the implacable resentment with which he regarded every person who had been attached to his mother. Several other cases are recorded in which Paul flattered and caressed, on the first day of his reign, those whom, within a few weeks afterwards, he degraded or punished.

That, however, of the early acts of Paul's reign which most attracted attention, was the minute details of police and military discipline which he commanded to be observed, and devoted the greatest portion of his time to seeing carried out, even to the smallest particulars. With an unaccountable singularity, he prohibited the wearing of round hats in the streets of St. Petersburg, and directed the soldiers and the police to take them away from those who appeared in them, and to tear them in pieces in case of resistance being offered. Many tumultuous scenes followed this petty and irritating edict, especially before it was generally known. An English merchant travelling in a sledge was stopped, and his hat snatched off by a soldier. Imagining himself to be assailed by a robber, he leapt from his sledge, knocked the man down, and called the guard. They soon arrived on the spot—not to assist, but to overpower and bind him. As the merchant was being carried off to answer before the police for his assumed offence, he was fortunate enough to meet the carriage of the English minister; and he instantly claimed the protection of that gentleman. Sir Charles Whitworth complained to the emperor, and remonstrated in a very spirited manner. In consequence of this the merchant was set at liberty; and Paul modified his mandate, by publishing that strangers who were not in the emperor's service, or naturalised, were exempt from the prohibition. Persons who wore round hats were no longer subjected to the indignity of having them torn from their heads but they were taken be-



fore the police, that their country might be ascertained. If found to be Russians, they were compelled to enter the ranks as soldiers; and if Frenchmen, they were expelled from the empire as Jacobins. This might lead to the supposition that round hats were regarded as the badge of some political society, or as expressive of some offensive sentiment on the part of the wearer. Such was not the case. The prohibition arose solely from the fact, that Paul had for some years entertained a peculiar aversion to round hats, in the same way that certain individuals entertain unaccountable antipathies to some common or harmless object. This would have been a sufficient reason for his setting another fashion in the matter of hats, or prohibiting any one from appearing before him in one of the objectionable shape. But it in no way excused the peevish and petty tyranny—trivial as the whim of some ill-tempered school-boy—to which he gave way. There are few who will not sympathise with another Englishman in St. Petersburg; who, on his hat being taken from him by an officer of the police, folded his arms, and, surveying the official with a look of compassion, exclaimed, "Ah, friend! how I pity thee for being a Russian!" So earnest was Paul in this absurd matter, that he commanded the *chargé d'affaires* of the king of Sardinia to quit St. Petersburg within twenty-four hours, because he had ventured to indulge in some raillery about the proscription of round hats, and to say that such trifles had often been on the point of occasioning seditions in Italy.

Another of Paul's petty, silly, and vexatious regulations, was that which prohibited the harnessing of horses after the Russian mode, and commanded the German fashion to be adopted instead. With strange pe-remptoriness, only a fortnight was allowed for those who kept carriages or other vehicles, to provide themselves with the new harness that was requisite to enable them to comply with the imperial mandate. The police were ordered, on the expiration of that time, to cut the traces of every carriage they happened to find harnessed in the old fashion. As may be presumed, the harness-makers availed themselves of the occasion to charge enormous prices for their labour and their commodities. But the new regulations extended from the harness to the coachman, who were commanded to adopt the German style of dress, which was

neither more convenient nor more elegant. Indeed, those of the *ishvoshlokki*, or coachmen, who could be induced to part with their beards and their kaftans, and tie a false tail to their hair, cut an extremely ridiculous figure. The majority, however, of these poor people obstinately adhered to their old costume. That commanded to be worn was assailed with ridicule; and Paul was at length compelled to soften his mandate into a request, that the people, if they desired to merit his favour, would dress in the German fashion.

In the more barbarous times of the empire, a slavish custom prevailed, according to which, every person, whether noble or serf, male or female, used, on the appearance of the czar, to alight from their coach or horse, and prostrate themselves in the snow or the mud before him. This base custom was abolished by Peter the Great, in whom it excited so much manly indignation, that he ordered every person to be caned who practised it, and not unfrequently administered the punishment himself. Paul, who had not the sense to see that such a humiliating and semi-idolatrous salutation, on the part of the ruled towards the ruler, was a dead, rotten vestige of the past, which could not be permanently revived, resolved to re-establish it in all its rigour. It is a strange reflection, that this miserable despot, deficient both in the intellect and fair personal proportions usually falling to the lot of the human race—seeming, by his dwarfish and disgusting appearance, and his malignant tricks, to bear a closer affinity to the monkey than the man, should yet be so strangely anxious to compel God's creatures to bow perpetually into the dust before him. Perhaps this morbid desire, that men should observe towards him the most humiliating external forms of reverence, arose from a strong consciousness of his own natural meanness and inability to command the respect of his fellow-men. The etiquette observed within the palace was rendered more servile than it had ever been before. Those who were permitted or required to kiss his hand were compelled to make the floor resound with the stroke of their knee as they knelt, and to let the sound of the kiss be plainly heard as an evidence of its genuineness. Foreigners, on visiting any of the palaces or imperial gardens during the absence of the emperor, were compelled to remain uncovered the same as if he was present. Paul thus arro-



gated, even to his residences, the ceremonials that are commonly observed only in the temples of religion. Any neglect of these trivial and offensive regulations was punished as if it had been a serious crime. A general officer, who passed on without his coachman's observing the emperor riding by on horseback, was immediately stopped and arrested. Prince Galitzin was also put under arrest by Paul himself, on account of his having kissed the hand of the imperial idiot in too negligent a manner.

Another of these early and contemptible regulations of Paul, was a command to all tradesmen to obliterate from the front of their shops the French word *magasin*, and substitute the Russian word *lavka*, or shop. The reason assigned for this frivolity was, that only the emperor could have magazines, and that it was the duty of tradesmen not to make use of lofty terms, but to make known their occupations in the plainest language. The real cause of this alteration was Paul's dread of French revolutionary principles, and his consequent aversion to everything derived from France. This feeling caused him to descend so far into absurdity, as to issue one ukase forbidding the academy from employing the word *revolution* when speaking of the course of the stars; and another, commanding the actors to use the word *permission*, instead of *liberty*, in the bills of the theatres. Many other new regulations were made, many of which contradicted or frustrated one another: thus, what was ordained one day, was often obliged to be modified or annulled the next.

These changes, with respect to civil affairs, were outdone by those which Paul introduced into the army. He had almost a mania for military meddling, and the assumption of the duties of the corporal and the army-tailor. It is generally admitted that many reforms were required in this direction; but, assuredly, Paul was not the man to effect them. He was altogether devoid of military talents, and merely loved to play with soldiers, and dress and drill them as children do dolls. The changes Paul effected were not improvements, and in no way promoted the efficiency of the troops. The dress of the Russian soldier was simple, convenient, and adapted to the severity of the climate. It consisted of two garments only; a red and green jacket, which was fastened by a girdle within the folds of the loose *chavari*, or red pantaloons, terminating in boots which were not only

put on with ease, but, from their size, admitted of such additions underneath as protected the wearer from the inclemency of the atmosphere. Yet it was with the dress of the soldiers that Paul most delighted to interfere. He compelled them to adopt the military costume of Prussia, which was not only detested by the men as graceless and anti-national, but regarded as unsuited for them. The costume we have briefly described was thrown aside, and the whimsical, lacquey-like dress of the Prussian troops given to the soldiers instead. The men had to spend an hour every morning in plastering down their hair with powder and pomatum, or rather with grease and flour, which Paul ordered to be used instead as more economical; and in buttoning their tight black spatterdashies. The annoyance of the men amounted to irritation, the more so as these alterations were discountenanced by the most distinguished of their generals. When the brave and eccentric Suwarrow received orders to establish these novelties, together with little sticks as models for the soldiers' pigtails and side-curls, he expressed his contemptuous feelings in some doggerel lines, which are not destitute of wit. "Hair-powder," said the blunt soldier, "is not gunpowder; curls are not cannon; and tails are not bayonets." The sarcasm was repeated through the whole army, and reached the ears of Paul, who was so incensed that he dismissed Suwarrow from his command, and exiled him to his estates, where the eccentric veteran chiefly occupied himself in practising bell-ringing, hopping a long distance upon one leg, and similar odd pastimes, until the exigencies of the empire compelled Paul to restore to him his military honours.

The emperor commenced his new regulations from the very morning that he first grasped the imperial sceptre. The palace and its courtyards were at once thrown into the utmost confusion. It is said they had the appearance of having been taken by assault by foreign troops, as the men who mounted guard there, differed so much, in dress and style, from those who had done so the day before. Every morning the new emperor, before he would attend to any other business, devoted three or four hours to manœuvring his soldiers, and teaching them to mount guard after a fashion of his own, which, according to military authority, was as original as it was singular. His *wacht-parade* (guard-parade) he regarded as



a most important institution, and the central point of his military system. This he had tried, with what he believed to be success, when he was grand-duke, when he had no authority to consult but his own will, and no opinion to regard beyond the limited circle of his own staff. He believed that it would apply, with equal certainty in its results, to the imperial army; and that idea so engrossed his attention, that he almost abandoned all other objects in order to dedicate himself assiduously to this strange and fruitless design. So intent was he upon the morning exercise, that he would not permit any one to approach upon other business, of whatever importance, while he was thus engaged. In order to take away all excuse for disturbing him at this time, he established a sort of office on the stairs of the palace, in which all letters were deposited; Paul promising to read them in due time, and furnish the necessary answers. Every morning, no matter how intense the cold might be, he was to be seen in the courtyard of the palace. There, in a plain dark-green uniform, jack-boots, and a large hat, he exercised his guards, gave his orders, received reports, published his favours, rewards, and punishments; and there every officer had to be presented to him, as he stood, surrounded by his sons and aides-de-camp, stamping his heels on the pavement to keep himself warm, his bald head bare, his nose cocked up, one hand behind his back, and with the other raising and sinking his cane in due time, and crying "Raz, dva; raz dva" (one, two; one, two.) He prided himself in braving a cold of fifteen or twenty degrees of Reaumur without furs. After this, none of the officers dared any longer appear in pelisses; and the old generals, tormented with coughs, gout, and rheumatism, were obliged to form a circle round Paul, dressed like himself.

Though an advocate of the most servile, passive obedience, and regarding himself as the chief emblem in Europe of the autocratic principle, Paul delighted in constant and rapid changes in every department of the state. So frivolous were his motives in many instances, that it has been observed, for anything to have subsisted under the reign of his mother, was a sufficient reason why it should cease to exist under him. The changes which he commanded to be observed in the civil departments of the

state, were even more capricious and unreasonable than those he had accomplished in social and military circles. The emperor was, in fact, influenced by a rage for alteration, which extended itself over every branch of the public service. All the provincial tribunals of the empire were remodelled, and their seats changed. These sudden movements produced great confusion and misery, for upwards of 20,000 persons, holding responsible appointments, were thrown out of employment.

The population of Russia had been divided into two classes—the nobles and the peasantry. The middle class was so inconsiderable, that it can scarcely be said to have existed. The reader will have seen that rank in that empire was rather a personal than an hereditary affair. The will of the sovereign could raise persons of the lowest origin to the dignity of nobility, as Peter the Great converted a peasant girl into an empress, and an itinerant pie-boy into a prince; and as Catherine II. had raised obscure officers to the highest rank which a subject, not of the imperial blood, could attain to. The path to nobility lay through a variety of channels. It was sometimes attained through military talents or civil service, but more frequently by corruption and favouritism. Paul abolished the former dignities, probably with a view to conciliate the old nobility. The result, however, was the creation of a middle order of society, possessed of wealth and the advantages of education. These were repulsed from the exclusive circle of the aristocracy, and thrown back upon the community below them. It has been well observed, that "if ever a revolution of a popular character were to take place in Russia, it would spring from the sympathies which were by this means generated between the middle class and the serfs; the former, in a spirit of retaliation, endeavouring to elevate the latter, and both combining against the nobility. But the overawing power of the throne, embodied in the absolute authority of the emperor, who may at any moment revoke or reconstruct, give or take away the rights of his subjects, renders the prospect of such a struggle extremely doubtful. Russia is, in fact, governed by ukases; and all orders in the country, as well as all its laws and institutes, exist solely by the breath of the supreme and irresponsible monarch.\* The whole

\* This state of things was materially strengthened by the absolute Paul during his brief reign, and

was rigidly maintained by his sons Alexander and Nicholas. There was more freedom in Russia under



empire, throughout its most minute ramifications, may be regarded as the most perfect example of arbitrary government that has ever subsisted in the world. So comprehensive and searching has been its despotism, that even if political freedom were granted to the people, they would be incapable of turning it to advantage. They have been kept in such a state of vassalage that they are literally ignorant of the full meaning of liberty. They understand it to mean nothing more than exemption from labour, and permission to leave the glebe to which they are confined, and wander vagrantly, like loosened cattle, into other pastures. Domestic servitude has become second nature to them, and their notions of a happier mode of existence do not extend beyond a release from immediate oppression."

An instrument so dangerous to despotic governments as the press, was not likely to escape the restrictive and rigorous hand of Paul. He established a censorship of so inquisitorial and severe a kind, that it amounted almost to a prohibition of the printing-press. Only three were allowed to be used, and they were to be confined to printing the numerous ukases of the emperor, books for the church, and such works as should be approved of by the government and the chief ecclesiastical dignitaries. The importation of foreign catalogues was forbidden, that the people might not be made acquainted with the progress of literature and philosophy in other countries. Even the insipid and emasculate volumes that were permitted to be published, were obliged to have stamped on their title-page the fact that they had passed the censorship, and obtained the imperial permission to be circulated. Any person, also, who received a book or newspaper of any kind from abroad, was compelled to carry it immediately to the committee appointed to control the press. In almost any other country in Europe, such a tyrannous edict would have produced a revolution: but books are not even yet a national want in Russia; even the higher classes are not much given to literature, and the intellect of the people is slow and sluggish—indeed, almost latent, as far as thoughtfulness and intellectual culture is concerned.

the sway of Catherine II. than there has ever been since. Under that enlightened ruler, the Russian empire bid fair to reach a degree of civilisation and popular culture which it is now vain to expect, unless another sovereign of her intellectual calibre and liberal sentiments succeeds to the sceptre of the

Thus the severity of Paul's despotic measures with regard to the press, was not so severely felt as it is natural for Englishmen to suppose. The suffering and feeble negro does not feel, as a heavy burden, the chain to which long use has accustomed him. The Russian peasant who could not read, and the Russian gentleman who seldom cared to do so, did not feel very bitterly an oppression which would be so intolerable to Englishmen, that, amongst them, it could not be maintained a day.

The new emperor extended his oppressive regulations from books to education. He forbade all his subjects to send their children into Germany to be educated, assigning as a reason, that dangerous principles were inculcated in that country. All Russians studying at foreign universities were commanded to return home, on penalty of confiscation. At the same time, the appointment of all foreigners to judicial or ecclesiastical positions in Russia, was declared null and void.

But perhaps the most inquisitorial and offensive of all these despotic whims, was a command that all strangers in Russia should regularly attend at their respective places of worship, and rigidly perform all the rites of their religion. Roman catholics were required to attend the confessional, to take the sacrament of penance, and to prepare themselves for receiving the host at Easter. Any neglect in these matters rendered them liable to be punished as rebels; yet, at the same time, the priests were ordered only to give absolution to such as should merit it—a regulation which made the good-will of the priest necessary for the safety of the individual. The catholic church, which had been almost deserted, was now crowded. The priests belonging to it—French, Germans, Italians, and Poles—took their seats in the confessionals. A box was placed before every confessional, and into it the presumed penitent was compelled to drop a card, containing his name, occupation, and address. Every evening these cards were taken to the emperor, who forgot the dignity of his exalted station in performing the petty and obnoxious duties of an agent of police. Every person, after

north. In reflecting upon Russia as it was under the reign of Paul, and comparing it with the empire as ruled by Catherine, we seem to have relapsed into the barbaric past, rather than have gone forward into the future. Catherine was an absolute monarch; her successors have been despots.



confession, received a card of absolution, which admitted him to the communion-table, and exempted him from further persecution. The priests soon carried on a profitable trade in these cards, which they readily sold to those who desired the protection conferred by them, yet objected to attending the confessional. With an ostentatious parade of charitable consideration, the sick were informed that they might require the confessor to attend them at home; and the poor, that the host should be carried to them gratis. It can scarcely excite surprise, that after such despotic and eccentric regulations as these, Paul should prohibit the wearing of pantaloons and lapped waistcoats. These articles of raiment were placed in the same category with round hats, and equally excited the irritability of the moon-struck emperor. To such an extent did he carry his petty persecutions, that hotel-keepers and those who let lodgings were imperatively required to inform against every person entering their houses who wore the condemned pantaloons, hats, and waistcoats, or who did not attend church.

The long wars in which Russia was engaged during the reign of Catherine, together with the great improvements she effected, and her personal extravagance, had, notwithstanding the great increase of the revenue, produced certain pecuniary difficulties which exerted a very injurious influence on the circulation. To meet the heavy demands upon her, required greater means than could be safely obtained by taxation, in the existing state of the empire. Catherine, therefore, adopted the expedient of introducing paper money into circulation, and the Russian assignat came into existence. In Russia a singular cause operated in producing a diminution in the circulation of the precious metals. The serfs are not the legal possessors of their own persons, much less of any property they may be fortunate enough to accumulate. If they were known to possess property, they would in most cases soon be deprived of it by the cupidity of their lords,\* or the unblushing extortion of some

government official. The peasant, therefore, who had saved a little money, commonly buried it in some secret place, frequently concealing the circumstance even from his wife or children, lest they might betray or plunder him. Thus, when a serf was drawn for a soldier, sold by his master, or removed to some other locality, it frequently happened that the buried treasure was never heard of again. Even in Moscow and the large towns of the empire, the same custom was observed; and in this manner large sums were constantly withdrawn from the circulation. Gold was also sent out of Russia, in large quantities, during this reign, for the purpose of purchasing the services of spies in other countries, and to prosecute secret designs for objects of ulterior aggrandisement. Thus, in Poland, immense sums were lavished on the traitors who facilitated the slavery of their native land; in Moldavia, to win over the nobility; in Constantinople, to keep up a system of espionage; and in the Archipelago and other places, to promote an insurrection among the Greeks, and the subjects of the sultan in the Adriatic gulf.

When Catherine had recourse to assignats, she promised that she would not permit the issue of these notes to exceed in value the sum of 100,000,000 roubles, for which a bank, established for that purpose, was rendered responsible. For some time the empress kept her word, and the issue of assignats was in due proportion to the amount of specie in reserve. The convenience of the new paper money, and the confidence reposed in the empress, rendered it so popular, that the course of exchange rose, in time, to between two and five per cent. in its favour. Catherine, ignorant of the science of finance, supposed that this favourable state of affairs might be maintained, though the quantity of assignats in circulation was materially increased. Yielding to the temptation, she therefore violated the promise she had given, and issued assignats to the amount of 600,000,000 roubles, instead of 100,000,000, to which she had promised to limit herself. The result was, that the assignats fell

\* The proprietor of the soil seldom hesitates to seize, by some fraudulent pretext, the savings of the peasant, when he discovers them. The following painful example of this kind of oppression is related in *Clarke's Travels in Russia*:—"A peasant, in the village of Selo Molodi, near Moscow, who had been fortunate enough to scrape together a little wealth, wished to marry his daughter to a tradesman of the

city; and for that purpose, that she should be free, he offered 15,000 roubles for her liberty; a most unusual price of freedom, and a much greater sum than persons of his class will be found to possess. The tyrant took the ransom, and then told the father that both the girl and the money belonged to him; and, therefore, she must still continue among the number of his slaves."



gradually in value, were at last altogether rejected, and a calamitous panic ensued in commercial circles. Not understanding the cause of this, the empress continued to multiply the quantity of assignats, and thus increased the evil. She even issued a new kind of paper money, called cabinet notes, which partook something of the nature of exchequer bills, and were put into circulation for the purpose of discharging her own private debts. They were payable at the end of a year, and bore interest at the rate of six per cent.; but, in the event of the interest not being claimed immediately after the expiration of the year, it was refused to be paid, nor would the treasury reimburse the holders of the notes until they had exacted a bonus from them. The consequence of this was the ruin of thousands. Tradesmen, into whose hands these notes happened to fall, or who were obliged to accept them in cases of necessity, were glad to negotiate them at a loss of forty per cent.; and at last it became impossible to negotiate them upon any terms. The result of this breach of good faith was the withdrawal of public confidence from the empress, and the rapid disappearance of gold and silver from circulation.

Still in ignorance of the cause of these disasters, the empress persevered in a course of error, by causing the coin of the empire to be progressively adulterated, with the object of diffusing a smaller intrinsic value over a larger space. The inevitable result followed; credit fell rapidly, and the rouble in specie sank below its intrinsic value according to the rate of exchange in London and Amsterdam. Many persons speculated upon this disastrous state of things, by buying up the roubles, and reselling them in Prussia and Austria, where they were melted down, and reissued at a considerable advantage. Gold and silver at length disappeared from circulation, and nothing was left of the metallic currency, except copper. Even this was sent out of the country in large quantities, in consequence of the dishonesty of the ministers, who farmed out the mines to their favourites, and participated in the profits arising from a corrupt system, by which the state was defrauded. By the commencement of the year 1796, the bank, unable to change the assignats, was on the point of bankruptcy; a calamity which the

empress endeavoured to avert by giving orders for an adulteration of the coin to such an extent, as to recast them at double their former value; thus, the silver pieces of ten kopecks were to pass for twenty, and those of twenty for thirty. The death of the empress prevented the issue of this fraudulent coin, and the financial difficulties of the state were left to be adjusted by her successor.

Paul, on his accession, immediately suspended the fabrication of this base coin, and did not permit the quantity that had been prepared to find its way into circulation. With more wisdom than might have been expected from him, he strove to restore credit to the assignats; and began by diminishing their quantity. His earnestness in the business, and the punishments he threatened to inflict on any person in authority who should be detected in corrupt conduct with respect to the finances, produced a feeling of confidence, and brought about some beneficial results. The assignats rose in value from ten to fifteen per cent. Paul, however, soon showed that he understood no more of the doctrines of finance and currency than Catherine did. Influenced alike by ignorance and despotism, he issued an order, that the paper rouble should pass at the same value as the silver rouble.\* He even employed his son, the Grand-duke Constantine, to perform the dishonourable task of visiting in disguise the shops of tradesmen, for the purpose of entrapping them into a violation of the imperial order. Every one thus convicted of jobbing in money was severely punished.

Of course, this arbitrary and ridiculous expedient soon made matters worse than it found them; for the natural tendency of such regulations is towards the entire extinction of commerce, or the reduction of it to the primitive and inconvenient form of barter. Paul then announced that he intended to raise the assignat in estimation, by publicly burning a number to the value of 6,000,000 roubles. This ceremony was accordingly performed with great gravity, in the presence of the emperor, to whom the ashes of the notes were solemnly presented. The assembled people raised shouts of joy; but it was soon known that the affair was a paltry and dishonest trick, from

\* The absurdity and injustice of this order will be better understood if the reader will bear in mind that the value of the silver rouble is about

four francs in French, or 3s. 4d. in English money; while the proper rouble is worth only about one franc, or tenpence.



which no good could result, as the assignats which were destroyed did not form any part of the quantity that had been sent into circulation, but were a remnant of the stock prepared by the empress Catherine, to be used as her necessities might dictate. The detection of this miserable subterfuge exposed Paul to the charges of insincerity, and of trifling with the public disaster.

The next step of the imperial meddler was to submit the matter to a committee of finance; a thing which he ought to have done at first. They were instructed to take the subject into consideration, and then make such proposals as appeared most likely to effect the object in view. After some deliberation, the committee concluded that the best plan would be to put an increased amount of the precious metals into circulation. This was indisputable; but the question was, how could it be done? Where was the gold, silver, and copper to come from? The mines were so badly managed, as to be comparatively unproductive. Another injurious and oppressive expedient was therefore resorted to. A heavy duty was laid upon all merchandise, whether imported or exported; and this duty was required to be paid in foreign money, which it was intended to recoin into imperials and roubles, and put into circulation in Russia. The result of this regulation was to inflict another serious check on commerce. To pay the duty on his goods, the merchant was compelled to purchase dollars and ducats, which necessarily rose in price as the demand for them increased; so much so, that he was compelled to pay them to the government at a loss of about one-third upon what they had cost him. He therefore placed an exorbitant price upon his goods, besides resorting to smuggling; for which the extent of the frontiers and the dishonesty of the officers afforded great opportunities. Thus, the advantages gained by the new duties were lost by this means; and while these foolish experiments were in progress, the credit of the assignats went down again to the same ruinous point at which Paul found it on his accession.

The finance committee being as ignorant, and, consequently, as unlucky as their master, the emperor devised a new scheme of his own. This was to collect all the precious metals to which the government could lay claim in any part of the empire. Catherine loved to shower gifts upon all who served her, and to shed a splendour over everything

connected with her government. In the exercise of this temper, she had caused magnificent hotels to be erected in all the chief towns, for the residence of the heads of the several departments of the local government. She also presented each governor with a costly service of plate, to be used on festivals and other public occasions. There were twenty-three governments possessing services of this kind, the least valuable of which had cost no less than 50,000 roubles. Paul calculated that much relief would be afforded by their conversion into money; and the governors were commanded to deliver them up to the mint. When this order was complied with, it was found that the intrinsic value of the plate was comparatively so small, that it would be of no avail in remedying the scarcity of money. Paul had forgotten to make allowance for the heavy charges of the goldsmiths in fashioning the plate, or for the expense of conveying it to the several provinces. Vexed at this disappointment, the foolish and irritable monarch ordered the plate to be broken up and formed into helmets, cuirasses, and other pieces of armour, to be used at his approaching coronation. This was done, and the silver armour then given to the goldsmiths, as payment for their labour in making it. Such were the financial operations of the emperor Paul!

Notwithstanding the embarrassed state of the national affairs, and the economical pretensions of the new monarch, he soon gave way to an extravagance as unmeaning and frivolous as it was enormous. In his coronation, he attempted to outvie even the sumptuousness of Catherine. The costly crown which had adorned her brow he refused to wear, and ordered another to be made of such magnificence, that its value was estimated at several millions of roubles. Catherine had given extravagant sums to her favourites; but Paul was still more lavish and reckless in his gifts. These were bestowed only on persons already so wealthy, that the increase merely served to pamper their pride and power into demonstrations of arrogance, dangerous both to the safety of the throne and the interests of the people. "Sycophants gorged by frauds," observes an energetic writer, "received presents from Paul that, had they been more judiciously distributed, would have maintained hundreds of families, and rewarded the deserts of thousands who served



the state with zeal, in indigence and obscurity. But it is one of the repulsive characteristics of a pure despotism, that the rich alone accumulate riches, while the poor not only remain poor, but are oppressed in proportion as the higher classes are raised more and more above the reach of the social sympathies. The impolicy of such proceedings is apparent, not only in the criminality of wasting the public resources upon improper objects, but in the creation of a craving and powerful body, whose attachment to the throne being purchased by expensive favours, is liable to be loosened from it whenever the means of buying up their support shall have become exhausted. In this mainly consists the difference between a sovereignty based upon the willing allegiance, the reasoning affections, and the consistent gratitude of a nation; and an authority looking out upon its possessions from behind a barrier of mercenaries, and perpetually coerced into fresh acts of tyranny by the very fears that arise from the consciousness of insecurity."

Not only did the emperor soon lose the popularity that seemed inclined to attach to him, in consequence of the first acts he performed after his accession, but he incurred general dislike. At court, a system of espionage and humiliating etiquette created a constant uneasiness and sense of fear. The people were harassed with petty and degrading regulations. A secret police paid inquisitorial visits, at all hours, to the houses of those who had excited the displeasure or suspicion of the emperor. Midnight arrests took place; citizens suddenly disappeared from their accustomed haunts; eccentric punishments were constantly inflicted; and a general panic prevailed. In the army, the caprice and despotism of the emperor spread terror amongst the officers. Any breach of Paul's minute regulations frequently elicited the severest punishments; and the officers went to the parade pale and fear-stricken. Even civilians, who, attracted by curiosity, had come to witness the exercise of the troops, were placed under arrest by the emperor, if their costume or their looks chanced to displease him. St. Petersburg became a gloomy residence, where all lived in a state of fear. No security remained for life or liberty, and all who could leave the city, did so. Every one dreaded

to meet the emperor; and he, aware of the sentiments of fear and aversion which he inspired, lived in a state of constant apprehension. He frequently reflected on the fate of his presumed father, and dreaded the dark designs of the assassin. As his fears increased, his despotism became more intolerable. Suspecting every one, he distrusted even the empress. If she spoke in a low voice, he immediately supposed that some conspiracy against him was in progress. On one occasion, when she was engaged in conversation with a foreign ambassador, he suddenly interrupted her by saying, "You are preparing, perhaps, madam, to act the part of Catherine; but know, that you will not find in me a Peter III."

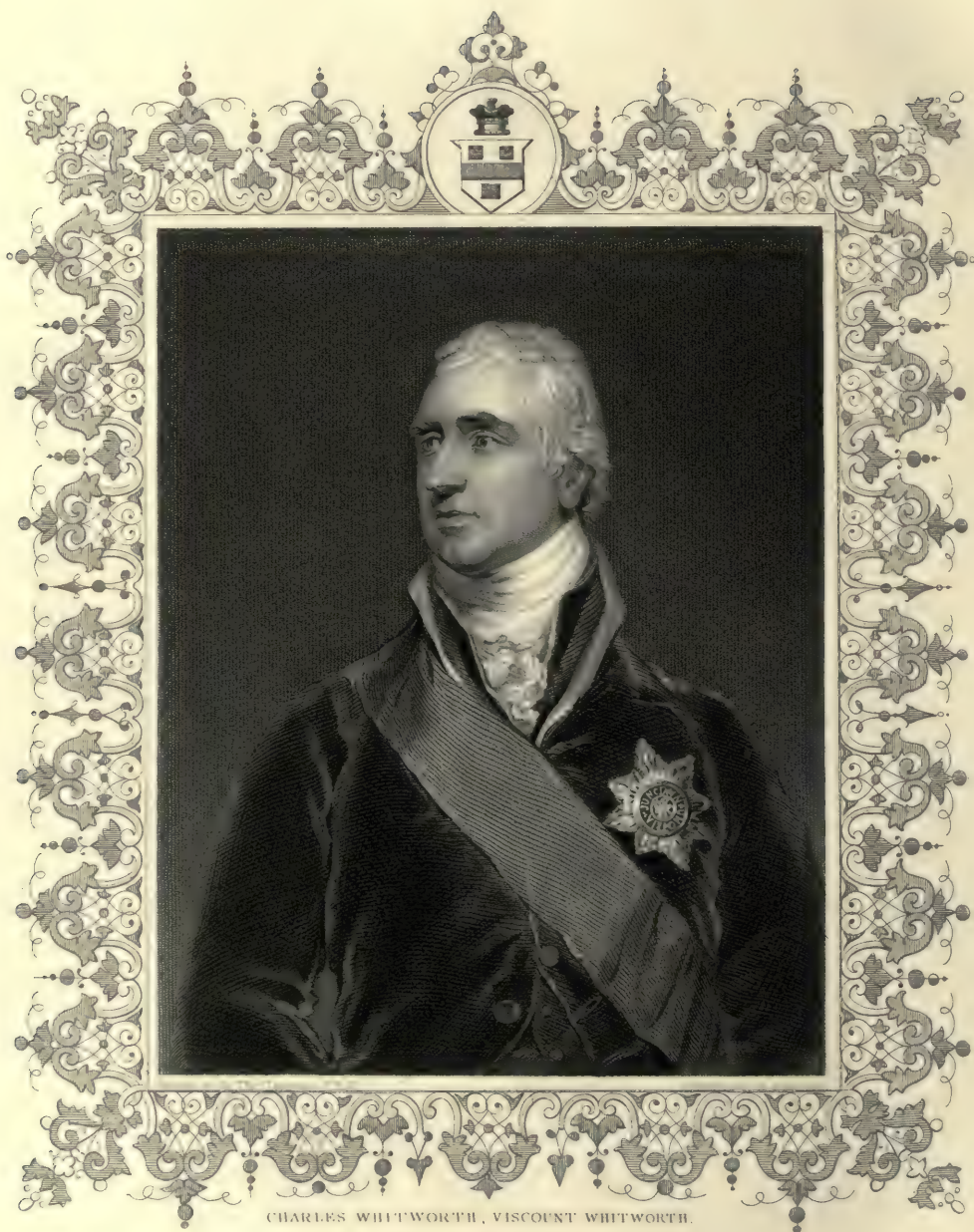
Amidst Paul's tyrannies, he performed a few charitable actions; these were, however, of so confined and petty a character, as to be almost contemptible. At Moscow, he converted an old building into a hospital, where fifty patients were supported at his expense. Sometimes he caused food to be distributed to poor officers; a mode of bounty which must have created a sense of degradation in those who received it. At other periods, small sums of money were given to certain distressed persons. But it has been truly observed, that his charities, like his military regulations, were essentially microscopic. What good he did proceeded from caprice, and not from benevolence; and when contrasted with the sums he wasted in needless expenditure, became altogether insignificant.

The law promulgated by Paul, regulating the succession to the throne, is regarded as the wisest and most useful act performed by him. This law corresponded with the system generally adopted in the oldest European states. By it the crown was to descend to the eldest son and his male issue; and in default of the latter, the second son and his male issue were to inherit; but in default of males, the children of the female descendants were to succeed, always observing the same order of proximity. When the successor was under age, the reigning sovereign was to appoint a regent; and in the event of his failing to do so, the regency was to be confided to the mother of the minor, or to the nearest relative.









CHARLES WHITWORTH, VISCOUNT WHITWORTH.

*Whitworth*

*English Ambassador to Russia for twelve years, 1788 to 1800.*



## CHAPTER XLII.

PAUL RECALLS THE RUSSIAN TROOPS FROM THE PERSIAN TERRITORIES; HIS HATRED OF THE FRENCH, AND OF REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES; HE ENTERS WITH ACTIVITY INTO THE ALLIANCE FORMED BY CATHERINE WITH AUSTRIA AND ENGLAND, FOR THE PURPOSE OF CRUSHING THE REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE, AND RESTORING MONARCHY IN THAT COUNTRY; PAUL CAUSES HIMSELF TO BE ELECTED GRAND-MASTER OF THE KNIGHTS OF ST. JOHN OF MALTA; SUWARROW APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND OF THE RUSSIAN AND AUSTRIAN ARMIES IN ITALY; VICTORIES OF SUWARROW; ILL-FEELING BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN AND AUSTRIAN TROOPS.

WE have related that Catherine coveted that portion of the Persian empire which extended along the shores of the Caspian, and sought to annex it to her own dominions. The expedition which she had sent there, under General Zuboff, brother to the favourite, had received a severe check, and the result was rather matter of disappointment than of congratulation to Russia. Paul, on his accession, resolved on the recall of an expedition which had been neither wisely undertaken nor successfully conducted. His attention was required in other directions; but even if such had not been the case, he would probably have taken the same course in his eager desire to reverse, wherever it was practicable, the policy of his predecessor.

A war with Persia seemed little more than a mere wantonness and an idle parade of power on the part of the empress. Such was not, however, altogether the case. Her motives have been thus ably analysed by a writer to whom we have before been indebted:—"Catherine had accustomed her subjects to such warlike habits, and had been so incessantly engaged in projects of aggrandisement, that the peace she entered upon with Sweden and Turkey plunged her into a state of inactivity, which presented too sudden a transition to be of long continuance. While she was thus releasing herself from expensive and protracted wars, the whole of the rest of Europe was involved in contention. She had, therefore, hardly closed the Turkish campaign, when her restless spirit, repenting of that hasty measure, longed for new fields of conquest, and discovered, in the unsettled state of Persia, a tempting region, not only for the employment of her armies, but for enabling her, indirectly, to resume that scheme of ambition, in reference to the East, which her treaty with Turkey had inopportunistically suspended. Inveterate as were her prejudices towards France, and anxious as she was to embark in hostilities against that

power, she was not yet prepared to assist Austria in its calamitous struggles, or to venture upon the succour of Italy, Egypt, and Malta. She perceived, in the spreading acquisitions of France, the seeds of future convulsions and the germ of an European war, and craftily postponed the period of her interference until the belligerent powers should have become so exhausted by their efforts that she could dictate her own terms. England was engaged in a sanguinary war with France, and Prussia was occupied with her new acquisitions in Poland. The disturbed state of Europe was in the highest degree favourable to her plans; and she saw, when it was too late, that, had she not concluded a peace with Turkey, the time was arrived when she might have marched, almost certain of victory, into the dominions of the Porte, and planted her standard on the walls of Constantinople. The only available movement, therefore, which remained opened to her, and which presented the probable means of ultimately extending her territories to the south of Europe and Asia, was an invasion of Persia. The internal troubles which agitated that country assisted her materially in the prosecution of her designs."

Great natural obstacles lie in the way of the advance of an army from Russia into Persia. The stupendous chain of the Caucasus mountains, extending from the shores of the Caspian to those of the Black Sea, seem as if designed by nature as a limit to the nations on either side, and as a barrier against their encroachments upon each other. Yet Peter the Great had endeavoured to extend the power of Russia beyond this gigantic barrier; and, notwithstanding the failure of his effort, Catherine made the same attempt. We have related that General Zuboff and his forces captured the town and fortress of Derbend, the capital of Daghestan; that the Russian army suffered severely from contagion, followed by a great mortality—was exposed to harass-



ing attacks from the fierce mountain tribes, which, though successfully repulsed by the Russians, inflicted on them such losses as seriously reduced their ranks, and made large reinforcements necessary. In addition to these difficulties and misfortunes, the Russians received a severe check in a battle with the Persians and the Lesghians, in which, after a desperate conflict of several hours' duration, neither side were in a condition to claim a victory. Zuboff had put his troops into winter quarters, and was waiting for further reinforcements, when the death of the empress Catherine took place.

Zuboff received, together with the news of this event, an order from Paul to suspend all operations, remain in his present quarters, and make the army swear allegiance to the new sovereign. The latter had resolved on the abandonment of the expedition; but, with his usual eccentricity and want of thought, he recalled the army in a manner which exposed it to be cut to pieces on its return to Russia: this, too, only for the purpose of insulting a general who owed his appointment solely to the favour of Catherine. After the lapse of a few weeks, a courier arrived from St. Petersburg with a large packet from the emperor, for General Zuboff. The latter, upon opening it, was mortified to find that it contained nothing more than a number of sealed despatches directed to the several commanding officers of the various regiments, but not a word addressed to himself. The indignity to which he was thus subjected, was augmented by the discovery that the despatches contained peremptory orders to each officer to return immediately to Russia by the shortest route.

On receiving these commands, the officers represented to Zuboff, that it was not possible for them to march at such an inclement season, especially as they were destitute of forage for the horses, without the requisite provisions for the troops, and when the mountain passes, through which it was necessary to pursue their way, were choked up with snow. The general could only reply, that he had no longer the authority to interfere, and that he durst not tamper with the orders of the emperor. He then dismissed the officers by saying, that however reasonable their statements were, they must, at all hazards, comply with the emperor's injunctions. Broken up into separate detachments, without a leader, or being able to make the necessary preparation for

its perilous journey, the army began its march. Each regiment took the route that seemed best to its colonel. Concerted action was therefore impossible, and the troops fell into the utmost disorder on the road. Their ignorance of the country, and the confusion that pervaded their ranks, entailed greater losses upon them than they had suffered at the hands of their enemies. After a miserable march of six weeks, the straggling remnant of the Russian army reached Kislar in the spring of 1797, resembling a military mob rather than an army. Zuboff himself, having received no orders, remained behind with two battalions of chasseurs. His situation was one of extreme peril. In a hostile country, 400 miles from the Russian frontiers, and with a mere handful of troops, he daily expected to be surrounded and cut off by the Persians or Lesghians. As he received no orders to retreat, he at length resolved to do so without orders, though at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the emperor. On arriving at St. Petersburg he resigned his commission; an example which was followed by many of the officers who served under him. This miserable termination of what was intended to be a great invasion of Persia, resulting in the conquest of that country, may be usefully reflected on by those who entertain fears that Russian troops could ever proceed to India, and there contend with the English for the sovereignty of that vast peninsula.

With respect to European politics, Paul seemed at first disposed to adopt a system of neutrality in the great war between republican France and the allied powers. It was, however, difficult for Russia long to remain passive. The triumph of the democratic principles in France, and the brilliant successes of the armies of that nation; its invasion of Switzerland, of Rome, Naples, Malta, and Egypt, added to the hatred which Paul bore towards everything French, induced him to alter his determination. The National Convention of France had now, for several years, assumed a hostile attitude towards all the ancient aristocratic governments of Europe, and not only threatened them with a sweeping democratic propaganda, but also promised that France would grant fraternity and assistance to all people who wished to recover their liberty. This was a fatal position to take up, and necessarily produced retaliation. Austria, Prussia, and England endeavoured to avenge and rein-



state the Bourbons; and the wars of the Revolution were the result.

Catherine, though prepared to interfere, had held aloof from the struggle, with the intention of deciding it in favour of Russia when the mutual exhaustion of the conflicting parties became apparent. Prior to the revolution she had liked the French; but that great convulsion, which tore up monarchy by the roots, and, for a while, trampled order into the dust, had excited in her a feeling of dread and hatred, on account of its being the birthplace of those principles which threatened to destroy every European despotism. This was the only point on which Paul sympathised with the late empress, and on this he went beyond it. Not only did he bitterly detest the republican and anti-religious opinions so prevalent in France, but he disliked the French people themselves. Their natural gaiety was offensive to the sullen austerity of his nature, while their repugnance to dead formalisms seemed to censure a man whose life was devoted to the establishment and elaborate performance of minute, and, commonly, senseless and frivolous formalities. Paul insisted on the most rigid observance of the externals of religion, because they formed the bulwark of his government; and though he kept an ugly and diminutive mistress, he professed a great admiration for morality. Never does it seem to have occurred to this strange creature, that his whole life, passed in selfishness, caprice, violence, and cruelty, was one of prolonged outrage upon both religion and morality. He condemned the French for their want of religion and morality. He sincerely believed them to be the most immoral people in the world; and, as it has been happily expressed, "he, with his usual inconsistency and extravagance, hated them less for the faults which he found in them, than for the faults which his implacable prejudices assigned to them. Catherine liked the French, until the revolution inspired her with vengeance against a country which had shown an example so fraught with perils to the old despotisms: Paul hated the French long before the revolution had furnished him with a feasible excuse for hostilities. This was precisely the difference between them: that Catherine acted in a spirit of watchful policy; and Paul took the current of his passions, which happened in this instance to run in the same channels."

Before the accession of Paul, he is reported to have made this memorable observation—"In whatever light, and in whatever circumstances I wish to view an emperor of Russia, his noblest part will always be that of a pacificator." The new emperor was, however, influenced by no principles; and if, as is most probable, he made this remark, he never retained it in mind as a guide of his conduct. In the February of 1795, an alliance, offensive and defensive, was formed between Russia, England, and Austria, with the object of acting against the republican government of France, the extinction of the revolution, and the restoration of monarchy in that country. This alliance was not, as we have shown, productive of any great results at the time. Catherine desired to husband her strength, and to hold the balance between the great contending powers; she aimed, in fact, at being the arbitress of the affairs of Europe. Prussia held aloof from this triple alliance, and, in the April of the same year, made peace with the republic, to which Spain had already submitted.

Catherine, at the time of her death, had an army of from 40,000 to 50,000 men, under General Suwarrow, assembled in Galicia, with the object of joining the troops of her allies against France. Paul, who disliked Suwarrow, and feared a general who was so popular with the soldiery, grasped, as we have seen, at a petty opportunity of depriving him of his command. But the solicitations of Austria and the subsidies of England, now induced Paul to enter into active hostilities against France. He agreed to assist Austria with 60,000 Russians; and in the December of 1798 he entered into an engagement with England, by which he bound himself to furnish an auxiliary force of 45,000 men, to act with the British troops in the north of Germany; in return for which, England was to provide a monthly subsidy of £75,000, and an immediate advance of £225,000.

In entering actively upon the war, Paul was, however, influenced by another and more personal consideration. The island of Malta was granted by the emperor Charles V., in 1530, to the grand-master and religious fraternity of St. John of Jerusalem, who had recently been expelled from Rhodes by the Turks. The knights of St. John thus became sovereigns of Malta, and were independent, with the exception of a trifling annual feudal acknowledgment of



tenure to the king of Sicily. To protect the island against the Turks and the pirates of the Mediterranean, they commenced those famous fortifications which remain to the present day. The knights were divided amongst themselves by dissensions, and a few of their number offered to surrender, or rather to sell, the island to Russia. They had applied to Catherine upon the subject, but she declined to avail herself of their proffered treachery. On the offer being made to Paul, he accepted it; but he was so long in arranging the details of the bargain, that it slipped from his grasp. In 1798, the French expedition which was conveying Napoleon to Egypt, made its appearance before Malta; and the fortress, which was held to be impregnable, capitulated without firing a shot. The cause of this was, that while one section of the knights were engaged in selling the island to Paul, another section, including Baron Homspesch, the grand-master, concluded arrangements for the same purpose with Napoleon. The grand-master was to receive 600,000 francs, a principality in Germany, or a pension for life of 300,000 francs; while to each of the French chevaliers was awarded a pension of 700 francs per annum. The successful conspirators had taken their measures with so much precaution, that when the French fleet arrived, the batteries were unarmed, the garrison was scattered in disadvantageous situations, besides being almost destitute of stores and ammunition. It was fortunate for the captors that such was the case, for the fortifications of La Valette were so strong, that they might have baffled the whole power of the French fleet and army, even supposing that Napoleon could have spared time for the siege. As he and his staff passed through the triple line of fortifications, General Caffarelli observed to him, that "it was lucky there was some one within to open the massive gates to them; for had the place been altogether empty, they would have found it rather difficult to get into it." Thus fell one of the most renowned fortresses in the world; the magnificent plate, and other treasures of the order, were taken on board the French fleet; and Napoleon, leaving a garrison behind him, departed for Egypt.

This disappointment greatly irritated Paul, who had made so sure of possessing Malta, that he had already appointed a governor of it. The power of France seemed

to be taking that aggressive course which, in Paul's estimation, was only to be followed by Russia. He was also encouraged by the subsequent destruction of the French fleet by Nelson, at the battle of the Nile—a circumstance which broke the charm of republican invincibility. Now he believed was the time when the arms of France might be effectually resisted; and he published a declaration, announcing that he was ready, with all the force of his arms and the resources of his empire, to assist in restoring the old relations among the European states, and to arrest the progress of anarchy and democratic principles. As to Malta, though it was then in the possession of the French, he became grand-master, in name, of the really now extinct order of the Knights of St. John. Those who resided within the Russian empire, declared the Baron Von Homspesch and his companions to be traitors, and they appealed to the protection of the emperor. Paul gave a gracious response, and caused them, in their names, and in those of their absent brethren, to elect him as grand-master. It was a strange anomaly, to see the head of the Greek church in Russia assume the office of grand-master of the catholic order of St. John of Malta. At the same time, the invasion of Egypt by Napoleon had drawn the Porte into the league against France. A curious and confused spectacle was thus presented. The union with the Turks of the grand-master of Malta, whose first vow was the extermination of the Mussulmans; the advance of the battalions of Russia, decorated with the catholic cross of St. John of Jerusalem, the schismatic cross of St. Andrew of Russia, and the protestant cross of St. Anne of Holstein, fighting beside the standard of the prophet, to re-establish the pope in Rome, catholicism in France, and Islamism in Egypt, was a sight at once strange and perplexing.

The Russian army commenced its march under General Rosamberg, and proceeded to cross the south of Germany. The insolence of some of the Russian officers towards the Austrians, and the misconduct of the Russian troops, who not unfrequently appropriated whatever they could put their hands on, and ill-treated those who complained, caused the emperor, Francis II., to represent to Paul the absolute necessity of recalling Suwarrow, whose influence over the soldiers was absolute, and whose fame would be a *prestige* of victory. For this



there was also a further reason. The Russian officers affected to despise the Austrians, while the latter were too proud to submit to the command of Russian generals who had not acquired a distinguished military reputation. Paul hesitated to appoint Suwarrow, for his ill-feeling towards that remarkable man had not subsided. He was, however, induced, by repeated remonstrances, to sacrifice his personal feelings to what was regarded as the interest of the common cause of the allies.

Suwarrow, on being dismissed from his command, retired, in the first instance, to Moscow. There the stories in circulation concerning his exploits rendered him an object of universal interest. The vindictive Paul, therefore, issued an order requiring the old general to leave the city, and take up his residence in a remote village. When this order was presented to the eccentric soldier, he inquired what time was allowed him for settling his affairs? "Four hours," was the reply of the police officer. "Oh!" exclaimed the veteran, in a sarcastic tone, "this is too kind! an hour is sufficient for Suwarrow." At the end of that time he had packed up his gold and jewels in a case, and was ready to depart. A travelling carriage was placed at his disposal; but regarding it contemptuously, he exclaimed, "Suwarrow has no need of a coach to go into exile; he can go there in the same equipage which he made use of to repair to the court of Catherine, or to the head of the armies. Bring me a cart!" A cart was provided accordingly; and in this uncomfortable vehicle did the general, accompanied by the police officer, perform a dreary journey of 500 versts. On arriving at his destination, he took up his residence in a wooden hut, where he remained under the surveillance of some subaltern officers of the police. There his solitude was made more oppressive by his not being permitted either to write or to receive visitors. On one occasion, Paul, either from caprice or from some better feeling towards the veteran, sent a courier to him with a letter, addressed, "To Field-marshal Suwarrow." "This is not for me!" exclaimed the old soldier; "if Suwarrow were field-marshal, he would not be banished to a village; he would be seen at the head of the army." So saying, he returned the letter unopened, nor could any representations induce him to receive it. Paul was irritated that he could not subdue the spirit of the warrior,

and caused the guard about him to be made more strict than before. Shortly after this, Paul was compelled, by his own interests and the representations of the Austrian emperor, to reinstate the field-marshal, which he did with more grace than might have been expected from him. "I have resolved," he wrote, "to send you into Italy, to the assistance of his majesty the king and emperor, my brother and ally. Suwarrow has no need of triumphs or laurels, but my country has need of him; and my wishes agree with those of Francis II., who, having conferred on you the supreme command of his Italian army, begs you to accept that dignity." On receiving this epistle, Suwarrow forgot his injuries, and joyfully accepted the command. The whole of Russia also looked forward, with expectant pride and elated enthusiasm, to the honours which the conqueror of Ismail was to win for the empire.

Suwarrow and his battalions arrived, in the April of 1799, on the banks of the Mincio, and took the command of the allied Russian and Austrian troops in Italy. The extravagant flatteries recently lavished upon him, had naturally fostered the high opinion he entertained of his own genius as a general, and the superiority of his troops over those of other countries. The jealousy of the Austrian officers was revived by the arrogance of his speech and bearing. He already talked of the capture of Paris, the restoration of the government of the Bourbons, and the punishment of all revolutionary atheists. The Austrian generals called a council of war, for the purpose of hearing his plans, and taking them into consideration. Councils of this kind were held in contempt by Suwarrow, and that not without reason. A perfect army acts like a vast living machine, pervaded by *one* undivided and absolute will. Question that will, and its unity is destroyed; destroy the unity of an army, and its efficiency is gone. The members of the council, beginning at the youngest, proposed their several schemes. Suwarrow listened in silence; and, when all had spoken, he took a slate, drew two lines on it, and said, "Here, gentlemen, are the French, and here the Russians; the latter will march against the former and beat them." Then he rubbed out the French line, and added, "This is all my plan; the council is concluded."

Just before the arrival of the Russians, the French army in Italy had suffered a defeat



at the hands of the Austrians at Magnano. In consequence of this, Scherer, the general in command, had been superseded by the able Moreau, who had recently attained great distinction in the field against the Austrians. Moreau found the French troops reduced to the number of 28,000, and so much wasted by sickness and slaughter, that it was impossible for them to maintain their position. He therefore retired towards Milan, leaving immense military stores, parks of artillery, and a bridge equipage in the hands of the enemy. This movement favoured the operations of the latter; for the Archduke Charles (who commanded the Austrian forces) and General Suwarrow had adopted the plan of making such a diversion of the French armies in Switzerland and Italy, as would enable the allies ultimately to prevent all communication between them; and, forming a junction of their own troops, to penetrate into France by the defiles of the Jura and the defenceless Vosges—the same quarter on which the great invasion of 1814 was afterwards effected.

Moreau had deemed it prudent to take up a position on the right bank of the Adda, where he posted his forces in three divisions. Suwarrow, who had lost none of the energy of his earlier days, was speedily upon them, and, before the French had time to concentrate their strength, he forced the passage of the river in two places, thus dividing the enemy's battalions into three parts, which enabled him to beat them in detail. One division was driven back towards Milan with a loss of 2,400 men, of which 1,100 were taken prisoners; another, after a brave resistance, threw down their arms; while the third was thrown into such confusion that they fled at the first shock. It is estimated that, in this opening engagement, the French lost 11,000 men, besides being driven from their most formidable positions. Suwarrow and the allies pushed on for Milan, which city they entered in triumph on the 29th of April. Suwarrow received the captive French officers with an ironical ceremony, which, though very humiliating, was better treatment than they had expected, as the barbarity of the Russian soldiers had become proverbial among the other nations of Europe. Indeed, it has been asserted, that the Austrians found it necessary to escort the captured French soldiers through the ranks of the ferocious Russians, who would otherwise have massacred them without hesitation.

Suwarrow should have instantly pursued the discomfited French; but he remained for more than a week at Milan, absorbed by the festivities with which he was congratulated in that city. During that time the shattered remains of the French army effected their retreat, after securing the communications with the adjacent passes of the Alps; the one towards Alexandria, with a view to occupy the defiles of Bocchetta and the approaches to Genoa; and the other, commanded by Moreau, to the plain between the Po and the Fanaro, at the foot of the northern slope of the Apennines. The commander of the allied imperial forces at length left Milan, and pushed forward with the design of forcing the Po, turning the left of the French, and drawing them into a general and conclusive action.

Moreau poured down upon the allies with such resistless force, that Suwarrow deemed it prudent to retire from the opposite bank of the Po, and to march upon Turin, then the chief depôt of the French magazines. After this he designed to cut off the communication of Moreau with France. Turin was captured by the allies, and the French garrison forced to take refuge in the citadel, and to leave in the hands of the enemy nearly 300 pieces of artillery, 60,000 muskets, and an enormous quantity of ammunition and military stores. This heavy loss deprived Moreau of all his resources, and threatened his army with destruction. But his high spirit triumphed over his apparently desperate circumstances. Invincible to the last, he strove to form a junction with the army at Naples, under the command of Macdonald, and endeavoured to regain his position on the west of the Apennines, so as to cover the avenues to Genoa. With Suwarrow close upon his rear, he succeeded, by indefatigable labour, in making a rugged mountain path across the Apennines, practicable for artillery and waggons, in four days; and over this precipitous track he defiled in excellent order, and reached the southern side of the mountains without interruption. The French army was saved; but the Italian conquests of Napoleon had, with the exception of a few fortresses, been wrested from the grasp of his countrymen. The French standards, which had recently floated on the towers of the principal cities of Lombardy, were now shivering in the desolate snows of the Alps.

Macdonald and Moreau made arrangements for a junction of their forces, with the



hope of dislodging the allies from their conquests. The former, in his progress, with an army of 37,000 men, obtained a victory over Prince Hohenzollern, who lost 1,500 men in the engagement. This success was followed by others; and Macdonald became master of Parma, Placentia, and the whole of the country in that direction. He also compelled Field-marshal Ott to retire behind the Tidone, in preference to risking a pitched battle in the open plains.

Suwarrow was soon on the alert; and on the 17th of June he arrived within sight of Macdonald's forces, which he resolved to attack the following day. The energy of Macdonald, however, led to an almost immediate engagement, which took place on the banks of the Trebbia. The Austrians were at first driven back in great disorder by the impetuous attack of the French; but Suwarrow succeeded in turning the fortune of the day. The French retired in excellent order, until a wild charge of Cossacks on their flank threw them into confusion. The latter, pursuing with too much temerity, received a check in their turn, and great numbers of them were mowed down by the grapeshot of their opponents.

Each army made preparations during the night for a general engagement on the following day. It was, however, noon before the Russians and Austrians were ready, and Suwarrow then led them against the French, who were drawn up in order of battle on the banks of the river. The latter crossed the river and charged the allies; but they met with a repulse. The conflict lasted until night, and was carried on with great fury. When twilight and exhaustion closed this second day's struggle, the French had been driven back across the stream, after suffering a severe loss. The hostile armies lay during the night with their arms by their sides, and the soldiers resting upon their guns. At midnight an alarm took place, and the French rushed into the river and fired upon the Russian videttes. Both armies were aroused, and the firing was continued for some time upon each side.

At ten o'clock the next morning the battle was renewed for the third time. Again the French were the assailants, and plunging into the river, they pushed on vigorously, and outflanked the Russian right. The latter suffered considerably, but fought with great firmness. They were at length driven back; but being reinforced by several battalions, the French were repulsed in their

turn, and compelled to recross the river. They also crossed the stream at another point under a shower of grapeshot, and, making a successful bayonet charge on the centre of the allies, succeeded in carrying all the batteries of the Austrians under Melas, and in throwing the whole line into confusion. But their good fortune did not continue; they soon became the assailed instead of the assailants: the battle raged with fury along the entire line, and Suwarrow at length became master of the whole left bank of the river. But his attempts to pass to the opposite side were repulsed by the closeness and rapidity of the French fire. Night again separated the combatants and ended this severe conflict, prolonged over a period of three days.

Each side had suffered heavy losses. That of the French, in killed and wounded, was estimated at 12,000 men; while that of the allies was not much less. Macdonald, exhausted by so severe a conflict, feared to risk a renewal of the engagement. Abandoning his wounded, he retreated during the night, and directed his course towards the Apennines. Unhappily for him, a despatch which he forwarded to Moreau, describing the forlorn state of his army and the line of his retreat, fell into the hands of Suwarrow, who, acting instantly upon this information, commenced a vigorous pursuit. The French were overtaken, and attacked both in front and flank. Immense numbers were taken prisoners, and the rest driven to seek refuge in the mountains. Amongst the captives were four generals and 506 officers. When Macdonald could safely pause to review his broken battalions, he discovered that, in this unfortunate campaign, he had lost no less than 15,000 men. In this famous battle the advantages lay with the allies; but it is only just to admit, that the honours of the day were divided. The French historians are naturally unwilling to admit that Macdonald was defeated. They say that the French could not conquer, but that they were not conquered.

In the meantime, Moreau had met with a better fortune than his brother in arms. While the Russians were pursuing Macdonald, he had thrown four battalions of the Austrians, under Bellegarde, into confusion, and raised the siege of Tortona. Suwarrow, therefore, abandoned the further pursuit of Macdonald, and marched against Moreau.

The latter retreated before the advance



of the Russian general, and, on finding himself hard pressed, retired to his former defensive position in the mountains. It has been asserted, and with much probability, that if Suwarrow had been allowed to have followed up his advantages, he would, in this campaign, have completed the conquest of Italy, and penetrated into the south of France. But the Aulic Council, which governed the great movements of the war, had issued positive orders not to extend the operations of the army beyond the Apennines, until all the fortified places in Lombardy had been reduced. The siege of these fortresses had been interrupted by the other operations of the campaign; and, with the exception of the citadel of Turin, all these strongholds were garrisoned by French troops. Suwarrow, therefore, was restrained from pressing forward at a moment favourable to victory. The truth was, that the cabinet of Vienna was jealous of the successes of the Russians, and by no means pleased to see Suwarrow play the master in Italy. Francis II. desired to check the French, but not to give too great a preponderance to the increasing power of Russia. Francis and his ministers were desirous to get into their own hands the whole of the Italian conquests. Now, therefore, that the republican forces had been shattered by a series of disasters, and that nothing remained to secure the possession of Italy but the subjugation of the fortresses, they wished to relieve themselves from the presence of their formidable ally, whose interference on the shores of the Mediterranean, except under such an emergency as had originally called him there, was not regarded without some vague apprehensions both by Austria and England. An explanation took place between the allied powers, and it was agreed that the whole of the Russian troops, after the fall of Alexandria and Mantua, should be directed by Suwarrow against Switzerland, while the Austrians should be left to prosecute the war in Italy. Indeed, so much ill-feeling existed between the Russian and Austrian troops, that it would have been difficult, under any circumstances, to have held them together much longer. Yet their separation was productive of calamitous consequences, for neither Austria nor Russia alone were a match for the brave and enthusiastic troops of France.

Some time was lost in comparative inactivity by the allies. This the French used to great advantage. The two divisions of

their army in Italy were reunited, Macdonald was recalled, large reinforcements arrived from France, and the youthful but brave and gifted hero, Joubert, was appointed to the command. Moreau, superior to any feeling of jealousy, accompanied the army, and, while he served under Joubert, gave him the benefit of his experience. Suwarrow, who, in obedience to his orders, had been watching over the progress of the sieges, on receiving information of the approach of the republican army, immediately made preparations to meet and encounter it. The desperate battle of Novi, which was fought on the 15th of August, followed. Joubert, whose army amounted to 43,000 men, rashly advanced from a secure position into the presence of a far superior force. Suwarrow immediately took advantage of this error, and fell upon the French while unprepared. Early in the day, Joubert was shot while in the act of waving his hat and exclaiming—"Forward, grenadiers! let us throw ourselves upon the tirailleurs!" He expired almost immediately; his last words being—"Advance, my friends, advance!" Great disorder followed his death, but this was retrieved by Moreau, who then assumed the command. The contest was resumed, and the Austrians were driven back, and would have been compelled to retreat, had not the Russians pressed forward to their assistance, at the price of a terrible carnage amongst themselves. The grapeshot of the flying artillery and masked batteries, and the destructive discharge of the musketry of the French, swept down whole companies of those fearless men. Yet as fast as their ranks were destroyed they were replaced by fresh battalions, who were sacrificed in the same way by the steady and effective fire of the French. Yet these courageous troops, closing their ranks as rapidly as they were thinned, still pressed onwards, to the cry of "Perod! perod!"\* and "Nieboss! nieboss!"† and, with bayonets charged, advanced, in a spirit of invincible obstinacy, to receive their deaths by the side of their expiring comrades. The conduct of the Russians on this, as well as on every other occasion throughout the war, justifies the remark of Frederic the Great, that "it was less difficult to kill them than to conquer them."

This attempt to force the French lines

\* Forward! forward!

† Never fear! never fear! War-cries of the Russians in battle.



utterly failed, and Suwarrow, therefore, resolved to concentrate his forces for a general and decisive attack. This also was withstood by the firm array and masterly organisation of the French, who hurled back their assailants with a storm of fire. The energetic Austrian general, Kray, returned ten times to the charge, and on each occasion was driven back with great loss. A frightful slaughter was continued for four hours, and then, both sides exhausted by fatigue, and perhaps appalled by the sanguinary nature of the battle, lapsed into a suspension of hostilities. The arrival of Melas, with the left wing of the allied army, induced Suwarrow to return to the attack. He himself led the main body of the allied army, like a torrent, against the centre of the French, while Kray and Melas fell upon the right and left wing. The French at length gave way; and Moreau, seeing that the day was hopeless, prepared for retreat. But his troops were so completely surrounded, that it was found impossible to effect this in good order. Whichever way they turned, the bayonets of their antagonists gleamed upon them, and they fled in disorder across the broken grounds in their rear. The allies were too much exhausted to pursue them, and were so crippled by their own losses, that they had little more than the name of a victory. The loss of the allies was estimated at 1,800 killed, 5,200 wounded, and 1,200 prisoners; that of the French at 1,500 killed, 5,500 wounded, and 3,000 prisoners. In addition to this, they lost thirty-seven cannon, twenty-eight caissons, and four standards. Still the battle of Novi led to no material advantage on the part of the allies. Nothing was decided by it: both armies fought with courage and brilliancy; both experienced enormous losses; and the French were able, after its conclusion, to return to their former position. This engagement closed the campaign of the Russians in Italy; "a campaign," it has been well observed, "signalised by that extraordinary resignation to death for which the Russians have since become celebrated, and which, even more than their valour, rendered them so formidable to their opponents."

National honours were bestowed upon Suwarrow by his countrymen. Even the emperor Paul seems to have shared the common enthusiasm, for he conferred upon the successful veteran the title of Prince Italinski; and also issued an ukase, in which,

with his usual eccentricity, he ordained that Suwarrow should be considered as the greatest general of ancient or modern times. The latter, in return, promised the emperor that the next campaign should see him enter France in triumph, after he had driven the French out of Switzerland. A careful writer, reflecting upon these events, observes—"To Russia it was of importance to make this, her first essay in the great European war, appear to the world in its most imposing shape; and certainly she was largely indebted to the skill, as well as to the courage, of her renowned general for the triumphs achieved by her arms. Previously to the Italian campaign the Russians were regarded as undisciplined savages, who were completely ignorant of the art of war, and who were indebted for their victories to their fierceness and physical strength, rather than to their power of combination and knowledge of the use of arms. This misapprehension of their qualities operated both advantageously and disadvantageously. It spread at first a species of terror amongst the French, who were led to expect an array of monsters, ogres, or giants, wielding strange and unaccustomed weapons, and enacting superhuman wonders on the field; but it had the ultimate effect, when the preposterous and indefinite notion of their powers was dispelled by actual collision, of inducing the French to treat them with contempt, because they found them nothing more than a race of hardy and obstinate soldiers. Thus, a French soldier, marching to the first *rencontre* with them, is said to have exclaimed, 'We shall see whether they have four arms!' and, upon his return, to have duly observed, 'Well! they have but two, and know not how to make use of them.'

"There is no doubt that the brilliant tactics of Suwarrow in Italy, his perseverance, celerity, and forethought, drew the Russians more rapidly into the theatre of European warfare than the mere temptation of their position could have done. Had Suwarrow failed, it is probable that, instead of pressing with such force upon the south, they would have retired to their own inclement regions, and concentrated their operations towards the east. But so completely did his successes engross the public mind and inflame the vanity of the empire, that it was confidently anticipated he would, in a few weeks, make a triumphant entry into Paris, as he had previously done at Warsaw;



nor were there wanting sagacious people to predict that the Russians and Tartars would once more make the conquest of the entire of Europe. What might have befallen had Suwarrow been permitted to prosecute the war upon the point which he had already

shaken, it is difficult to calculate; but the jealousy of Austria prevented that consummation of his plans, and consigned him to another quarter, where an enemy more formidable than any he had yet encountered, awaited his approach."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN IN SWITZERLAND; DEFEAT OF THE RUSSIANS UNDER KORZAKOFF AT ZURICH, BY MASSENA; SUWARROW ENTERS SWITZERLAND BY THE ST. GOTHARD; HIS TROOPS MURMUR AT THE SEVERITY OF THE PROGRESS; HE REANIMATES THEM, AND DRIVES AN ADVANCED BODY OF THE FRENCH BEFORE HIM; KORZAKOFF SUSTAINS A SECOND DEFEAT; SUWARROW IS COMPELLED TO RETREAT; THE REMNANT OF HIS TROOPS REACH RUSSIA IN A MISERABLE CONDITION; DEATH OF SUWARROW; ILL-SUCCESS OF THE UNITED ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN ARMS AGAINST THE FRENCH IN HOLLAND; PAUL WITH-DRAWS FROM THE COALITION AGAINST FRANCE.

NAPOLEON (then General Buonaparte) had, in 1797, seized upon a considerable portion of Switzerland, and annexed it to the Cisalpine Republic, which was the name given by France to the new government it conferred, or imposed, on the Milanese and Mantuan states. In the following year the French spread over the greater part of Switzerland.

The design of the emperor Paul in joining the war against France, partook of the extravagance which characterised all his other notions. Not content with issuing a manifesto, stating that he and his allies had resolved to destroy the impious government that ruled that nation, he even contemplated the accomplishment of a complete and permanent league amongst all the sovereigns of Europe, to arrest the progress of democratic principles, to restore the interests that had been swept away by the French arms, and to combine all denominations of Christians in an universal semi-political church, which should limit education to

the point it considered safe and prudent, and constantly teach the doctrines of the duty of passive obedience on the part of subjects, and the divine and unlimited right of monarchs to govern them in what manner and with what severity they pleased.

While Suwarrow had, in the early part of the campaign of 1798, been fighting side by side with the Austrians against the French in Italy, a Russian army, consisting of upwards of 40,000 men, had entered Switzerland, with the object of expelling the French from that locality. It was placed under the command of Rimski Korzakoff, one of the favoured lovers of the late empress Catherine. Like all who had shared her smiles, Korzakoff soon found himself disgraced by the emperor Paul; but the wily soldier regained the good opinion of the capricious monarch by pretending an intense admiration of the changes which the latter introduced into the discipline of the army,\* and by calumniating the French

\* The writer of the "History of Russia," in Lardner's *Cyclopædia*, observes, with an amusing gravity, that "the military system of Paul must not be confounded with that of Frederic the Great, or of Marshal Saxe, or that which was proposed by Griebert." We certainly should not have dreamed, even in the most disturbed and imaginative sleep, of there being any chance of so remarkable a mistake. The writer then proceeds to describe the "thing of shreds and patches," dignified, by an excess of courtesy, with the title of the "military system of Paul." "It was," he says, "wholly made up of a minute pedantry in regulations for the handling of arms, for the position of the fingers, the curve of the body on parade, the number of buttons on the coat and gaiters, the shape of the hat, the colour of the cockade, and such in-

significant matters. These were the points that absorbed his attention; while more serious considerations—the tactics and evolutions of the troops—were left in a great measure to the genius of the commander, who usually acted on the impulse of the occasion, without being much indebted to any previous method or rules of art. It was on this account that Frederic the Great regarded the Russian general, Butterlin, as one of the most dangerous of his enemies. 'One cannot,' he said, 'make any plan of defence against that man; he always acts in a manner directly contrary to every rational supposition.' Perhaps, observes a contemporary writer, Butterlin might have reasoned in reply, that if he had attacked that great master according to the rules with which he was so well acquainted, he



soldiers, whom he arrogantly affected to despise. Korzakoff's instructions were to act in concert with the Archduke Charles, then in Switzerland, for the general plan of the campaign, but to maintain the Russian army separately, that the fame of its exploits should not be shared with the Austrians, as it had been in Italy. The national vanity and insolence of Korzakoff will be at once estimated by the following incident. In a conference held with the archduke (who had proved himself an able general), relative to the positions the allied armies were to assume, the latter, placing his finger upon a spot of the map, said—"Here you must place a battalion." "A company, you mean," responded the Russian. "No; a battalion." "I understand," rejoined Korzakoff, "an Austrian battalion, or a Russian company." The vulgar inflation which dictated this speech was soon to receive a seasonable check.

The campaign had been opened in Switzerland before the arrival of the Russians, who were anxiously expected by the archduke. The French army was under the command of the calm and gifted Massena, the brilliancy of whose military conceptions was so highly appreciated by Napoleon, that he gave him the flattering surname of the "favoured child of victory."\* Massena had taken up a powerful position, from which the Austrians had vainly attempted to dislodge him; and on the arrival of the Russians, Korzakoff exhibited so much arrogance, that the archduke determined to leave the field open to him. He accordingly drew off the great body of his troops for the Upper Rhine, leaving the limited force of Korzakoff and Hotze, amounting to 56,000 men, to occupy a line forty miles in length. The French and the Russians were encamped on the opposite banks of the river Limmat, from which they gazed at each other with emotions of curiosity and wonder. The feelings excited in the minds of the French by the sight of their semi-savage adversaries, may be understood by the following observations of a French general who served in this famous campaign. He observed—"I have seen on the right bank

of the Limmat, while our army kept the left, posts of Cossacks squatted together in the most grotesque manner. They were seen to eat raw the aliments which are very carefully dressed in all civilised countries, such as meat, pumpkins, cucumbers, &c. The French music came occasionally, and played warlike airs on the banks—not long since so happy—of the beautiful Limmat. At such times, these Cossacks would rise spontaneously to dance in a ring, while the sentinel that they had in front stood leaning on his lance, motionless as a statue. On seeing, for the first time, these strange soldiers, I recalled to mind the travels and the Hottentots of Le Vaillant, or of Abyssinian Bruce. These troops are ill-attended to, badly clothed, and appear more despicable than they really are. There is a marked difference between the Cossacks and regular regiments; and it is difficult to be conceived, on seeing them in the same camp, that they were calculated for understanding each other and serving together. But there exists a difference still more striking between one officer and another of the same regiment. As much education, elegance, and politeness as you will perceive in a certain class of Russian officers, so much will you be surprised at the contrary in another class. Those of the latter are only distinguished from the simple Cossack by the distinctive mark of their rank."

A modern writer, commenting upon these remarks, observes, that the author of them "evidently underrated the military qualifications of the uncivilised Cossacks, whom he seems to have regarded more with the eye of an artist than a soldier; but his remarks serve to show the opinions of the French concerning their uncouth adversaries. Their position, and the hopes by which they were severally animated at this moment, cannot be contemplated without feelings of the deepest interest. The Russians, for nearly a century past, had been accustomed to success. Alternately triumphant in the north and in the east, they now found themselves encamped in the south, elated with a blind confidence that

would have been beaten; and that, therefore, he incurred less risk by infringing them all. Even Suwarow frequently reversed the usual modes of proceeding; choosing the most difficult routes, assailing the strongest points, and abandoning the happiest positions, for movements which other generals would not have adopted except in cases of extreme necessity."

\* Disraeli, in his novel of *Coningsby*, observes, that "several of the French marshals, and the most famous—Massena for example—was a Hebrew; his real name was Manasseh." Unfortunately for the reputation of his race, Massena acquired great odium by the constant exhibition of that insatiable avarice which is attributed to the Jews as the great vice of their character.



here also their progress must be a succession of victories; an anticipation which was doubly strengthened by their religious fanaticism and their hatred of republican France. The French, on the other hand, were excited by the proud recollections of those splendid acquisitions which they had won during the war; of their grand domestic assertion of popular theories over the monarchical principle; and, above all, by the wonderful resistance they had maintained against a formidable union of powers, each of which was, singly, an antagonist more than equal to themselves in territorial strength and fiscal resources. That the course of their bold campaigns was darkened by occasional disasters, and sometimes even clouded by the darkest reverses of fortune, had no other effect than to render them more circumspect, to give them a more combined system of action, and to draw into play more vividly that energetic spirit of personal courage and national honour which, on their side, counterbalanced the ferocity and recklessness of their opponents. They possessed, besides, this signal advantage—that they were headed by a celebrated general, the companion-in-arms of Buonaparte, upon whose crest victory had frequently alighted; while the Russians were commanded by an officer who had never distinguished himself in the field, and who was known even to his own troops only by his punctuality upon parade.”

These brief reflections have led us, for a few moments, from our narrative, in which we left the French and the Russians encamped on opposite sides of the clear and rapid river Limmat. Suwarrow had abandoned the plains of Piedmont, and arranged to join his countryman Korzakoff, and the Austrian general, Hotze, at Zurich. For this purpose he crossed the Alps and Mount St. Gothard, intending to dash, with his usual impetuosity, on the flanks of the enemy. This movement was anticipated by Massena, who resolved to strike a decisive blow before the intended junction could be effected.

Massena's plan was to make a false attack upon the town of Zurich, and then, by crossing further down the river, to attack Korzakoff at the same time both in front and rear. By this movement the garrison at Zurich would be cut off from its right wing down the river, while it was already separated from its left by the lake. On the 15th of September, the French crossed the

river in pontoons, under cover of their masked batteries, which played with great effect upon the Russian troops, who were drawn up on the other side of the stream. The latter were driven from their position; and although they twice rallied, were at length shot or bayoneted in heaps.

A body of 15,000 French were thus established on the right bank of the river. At the same time, a feigned attack on the left created a diversion of the Russian forces on the lower Limmat, while a dashing demonstration against Zurich drew the bulk of the Russian centre to that point. The French, who had crossed the river, carried Hurg and the heights on the north-west of Zurich; and Korzakoff then discerned that he was placed in a position of imminent peril, both in rear and front. A desperate sally, which he made at the head of 5,000 men, had no effect in improving his situation. Retreat appeared imperative; yet the only road by which it could be effected was in possession of the French troops. Within the walls of Zurich the allies were thrown into the utmost confusion. As night approached, the numerous watchfires on the adjacent hills discovered to the besieged the increasing lines of the enemy drawing closer every hour around them; while the bombs, falling fast in the crowded streets, choked up with waggons and horsemen, the dead and the dying, with the cavalry trampling over the bodies of the wounded in their despairing efforts to force their way outwards, in the vain chance of making head against the enemy, whose victorious shouts were ringing in their ears—formed, altogether, a scene of horror such as was not witnessed before throughout the whole of this devastating war.

In this state of things, the French general summoned the garrison to surrender; but Korzakoff made no reply. The French, therefore, passed the night in preparing for an assault on the following morning; and the Russians in making arrangements for a last and terrible effort to effect a passage through the French lines, and gain the road to Winthenthur, the only practicable line of retreat. In the course of the night, the Russians were somewhat cheered by the arrival of two strong Austrian battalions, and of the whole right wing of the army, hitherto detained by the feigned attack of the French; but which, on learning the real state of affairs in Zurich, had, by a long circuit, evaded the



outposts of the enemy, and succeeded in reaching head-quarters.

At break of day the Russians formed into order of battle, and dashed with impetuosity against the French division stationed on the German road. A furious contest followed, in which the Russians succeeded in cutting a passage before them. They then made arrangements for a retreat, leaving only a small rear-guard to defend the ramparts until the mass of the troops should have passed out of the city. Though the French were at first compelled to retire before the dense ranks of the Russians, which advanced with mechanical regularity, yet the sharpshooters of Massena, alternately discharging and retreating, together with the showers of grapeshot poured against the solid square of the Russians by the flying artillery of their enemy (which galloped up in the intervals of the Russian fire, and then returned to reload in a safe position), committed terrible havoc. Reiterated charges of this kind at length threw the Russians into confusion, which was contributed to by the inexperience of the arrogant Korzakoff, who utterly lost his presence of mind in conflict with an army which he had affected to despise. Unaccustomed to the skilful manœuvres of the French, he soon became bewildered by the rapidity and multiplicity of their movements; and his irresolution produced first uncertainty, and then panic. Consternation spread from the front to the rear of the Russian army, which abandoned its ammunition-waggons and baggage, 100 pieces of cannon, and the military chest, containing 60,000 Dutch ducats in specie, and 300,000 florins in silver.

The battle was, in fact, decided, and the Russians were defeated; but the French rushed into the town, and the conflict was prolonged in the streets and in the approaches to the ramparts. At length, the few troops which remained in the garrison laid down their arms, but not before the ingenious and benevolent physiognomist, Lavater, was shot, while animating the soldiery and aiding the sufferers.\* The Russian army might have been annihilated, but that some information which Massena possessed withheld him from pursuit. The dispirited Korzakoff therefore effected his

retreat, but not without a loss of 8,000 men in killed and wounded, besides 5,000 in prisoners, and all his baggage and ammunition. It is considered that this memorable battle of Zurich saved France from invasion by the allied powers, and contributed to the subsequent dissolution of the coalition which had been formed between the Russians and the Austrians. The victory of the French was followed by another triumph. The Austrian force, encamped higher up on the Linth, was taken by surprise by Marshal Soult, and compelled to retreat beyond the Rhine, leaving Hotze (its general) and many dead on the field, 3,000 of its number prisoners in the hands of the enemy, together with the whole of its baggage, and twenty pieces of cannon.

Massena now prepared to deal with Suwarrow, who, while these misfortunes were falling upon his lieutenants, was toiling through the acclivities and gorges of the Swiss Alps, every step of his way purchased by the lives of his vainly-sacrificed soldiers. Massena had detached Lecourbe, with about 4,000 light troops, to harass and impede the advance of the Russian field-marshal. This task they performed in a remarkably efficient manner. Posted in detached parties behind jutting rocks and scattered trees, they poured down a murderous fire upon the advancing foe. The winding and precipitous paths of the St. Gothard were difficult of ascent under any circumstances; and now, when covered by platoons of musketry, the Russians believed them to be impregnable. Exhausted by privation and fatigue, they began to murmur; some refused to advance any further; while others turned and fled before the shower of bullets which was directed against them. On this occasion, Suwarrow, amazed and angry, exhibited an instance both of the wild energy which ever characterised him, and of the extraordinary influence which he exercised over the minds of his troops. Having caused a grave to be dug in the road, at the foot of the ascent, he threw himself into it, exclaiming—"Cover me with earth, and here leave your general. You are no longer my children; I am no longer your father. I have nothing more to do than to die!" The soldiers were deeply affected

\* The death of Lavater is commonly attributed to a French grenadier; but it is also said that this man was not one of the enemy, and that the act was that of an assassin. It is further supposed that

Lavater knew the man, but, from a Christian spirit of forgiveness, never betrayed him. Lavater lingered a long time under the effects of his wound, and did not die until the beginning of 1801.



by this dramatic scene, and, crowding round the veteran, entreated to be led up the mountain. At the word, Suwarrow put himself at their head, and impetuously dashed up the path. The small body of French slowly yielded way, and were driven across the summit of the St. Gothard. Throwing their artillery into the river Reuss, they retired down the valley of Schollonen, and caused another obstruction to the progress of the Russians by destroying the Devil's Bridge.

So impetuous was the advance of the Russians, and so unskilfully was it conducted, that when they arrived the next morning at the broken bridge, hundreds of the leading files were forced over the edge of the abyss into the Reuss, by the pressure of the rear, which continued its mechanical march, unaware of the impediment which retarded the advance of the front. The difficulty caused by the broken bridge being surmounted, the Russians at length emerged from the Alps at Altorf, only, however, to find their progress arrested by the wide expanse of the Lake of Lucerne, where neither the Austrians nor the promised transport boats (which had been seized and destroyed by the French) awaited them. Suwarrow, almost mad with passion at what he regarded as the neglect of his subordinates, was compelled to lead his troops through the difficult defile of the Shachenthal, which rendered it necessary to abandon the artillery and stores. Two days of great fatigue and suffering brought his worn and dispirited troops to the fertile valley of the Muttenthal. There he received intelligence of the defeat of Korzakoff and the death of Hotze. Suwarrow, burning with rage and mortification, sent a messenger to Korzakoff, informing him of the arrival of his superior, directing him to march forward, and declaring that he would hold him responsible with his head for any further retrograde movement.

Korzakoff, stung by this imperious command, and, perhaps, alarmed by the threat of the general, reorganised his broken forces, and turning almost despairingly upon the advancing French, gave them battle near Constance. The Russians were again worsted, though their cavalry behaved with great spirit; and, after being thrice broken in furious charges against a dense body of infantry, they rallied under a destructive fire of grapeshot and musketry. But for the Archduke Charles, who hastened

to the assistance of Korzakoff's army, it might have been annihilated.

Suwarrow, after a terrible march, in which he lost numbers of his men, who dropped from exhaustion, or lost their footing on the slippery ridges and fell into the ravines below, found that the Austrians whom he had expected had suffered too much to be able to join him. The glory of the famous Russian general was on the wane, and he was entangled in difficulties which his wild energy was impotent to overcome. It seemed as if not merely the French, but nature itself, was in arms against him; that the silent mountains became conscious and grimly mocked his efforts. In their sublime presence an army sunk into strangely small and insignificant dimensions, and a raging general was almost as helpless as a famishing wolf.

Suwarrow now found himself in the heart of the Muttenthal, where the French were rapidly drawing their lines around him, and enclosing him within a circle from which escape seemed impossible. His troops were ragged and barefoot from much marching, disheartened by the mass of difficulties which weighed upon them, and almost without provisions. Suwarrow trusted to receive reinforcements from the emperor Paul, but none were sent. Having waited for some time in sullen inactivity, varied by fierce imprecations upon his foes, Suwarrow called a council of war, and proposed to force his way towards Schwytz, in the rear of the French position. His officers expostulated against a step which he himself felt to be dangerous even beyond rashness, and advised that he should adopt the more prudent course of retreating into the Glarus and the Grisons. The veteran at length yielded to what he felt to be a painful necessity, and, for the first time in his life, gave an order to retreat. So deeply was he wounded at this conclusion of his exploits, that he burst into tears after he had done so. His reputation for invincibility was extinguished. Yet, his resolution once taken, he acted upon it with his usual energy. Massena vainly endeavoured to draw him out of the defiles, in the hope of bringing his dispirited forces to an engagement, and of taking him prisoner. His retreat was conducted with consummate skill; keeping his enemies at bay like a lion, and compelling them to maintain a respectful distance by the fierceness of his attitude. On one occasion, when the



French assailed the rear-guard of the Russians, the latter turned upon them with such desperate fury, that they were repelled with the loss of 1,000 men killed, as many more in prisoners, and five pieces of cannon.

Suwarrow permitted his men a brief repose at Glarus, and then resumed his retreat over the rugged summits of the Alps. As he advanced the difficulties increased. The paths were choked with snow, and the men destitute of stores to sustain their strength. No covering could be obtained to shelter them from the inclemency of the wintry tempests, or trees to make fires to cheer their dreary bivouacs. Numbers perished from cold and famine; but the rest, impelled by an inexorable necessity, yet pushed on. On attaining the summit of the ridge, a prospect still more disheartening revealed itself to them. Everywhere mountains covered to their pinnacles with snow appeared to rise around them. The heavy clouds that floated over the peaks of the Tyrolese Alps, revealed by glimpses, as they rolled off at intervals, the seemingly interminable extent of these mighty mountains; and there was not a single sign of life or vegetation, not a wreath of smoke, nor a trackway visible, to afford them a direction out of this hopeless situation. During the night, most of the unfortunate soldiers had to sleep uncovered in the snow; and it was by a succession of fatigues and miseries which exceed description, that they gained the valley of the Rhine, from whence the remnant of that once fine army limped back to Russia, half-clothed, without baggage or artillery, and presenting in their wretchedness a most humiliating spectacle.

Suwarrow, in the natural pride of a career that had never known defeat, had talked of conquering France, and promised to enter Paris at the head of his triumphant troops. He returned a baffled, though not conquered, fugitive. Of a fine army nothing remained but a ragged and famishing troop, and a stain had passed over the military glory of the empire. His successes in Italy could not console him for this lamentable termination of the campaign. He became morose and sullen, and accused the Austrians, and even the archduke, of treachery. Paul had given orders for the reception of the veteran general at St. Petersburg, with the intention that he should make a triumphal entry into the capital. Apartments were even prepared for him in the imperial

palace. But when the capricious emperor learnt the result of the campaign in Switzerland, his complacency was succeeded by extreme irritation. By the time Suwarrow arrived at Riga, on his road to St. Petersburg, he was informed that he had fallen into disgrace. Paul attributed to him a great part of the reverses which had taken place in Switzerland, rejected his representations, and refused to give him a fresh command.

This last blow proved fatal to Suwarrow; the veteran was crushed beneath a load of humiliation too great for him to bear. He proceeded to St. Petersburg, and entered the city furtively in the dusk of evening; no longer the idol of the populace and the pride of his country, but a disgraced and unregarded man. He was supported from his carriage to his bed, which he never left again. Those whom he had recently regarded as his friends held aloof from him; and such was the dread entertained of incurring the anger of the emperor, that even the Countess Zuboff, the favourite daughter of Suwarrow, towards whom he had ever shown the strongest affection, suffered an unworthy fear to withhold her from the presence of her miserable and dying father. Paul afterwards softened towards the dying veteran, and permitted the grand-dukes to visit him. He was, however, far past that point at which the smiles of princes could have acted as a restorative. His mind frequently wandered, and after lingering until the 10th of May, 1800, he died at the age of seventy, after expressing a wish that a portrait of the empress Catherine, which he had worn constantly about his person, might still rest on his bosom in the grave. The greatest blemish of his character was his utter disregard of life in the execution of his duty; while his merits may be expressed in the sentence, that he is one of the few generals who never lost a battle. His funeral was conducted with great solemnity, and 15,000 of his soldiers accompanied his body to its last resting-place.

Paul's anger was not appeased by the disgrace of Suwarrow. The contemptible monarch, with that absence of generous or enlarged feeling which characterised almost every act of his life, poured out his wrath upon the suffering troops who had so faithfully served him, and whose bravery and endurance had extorted admiration even from their foes. With an ungrateful and



insolent forgetfulness of their services, Paul endeavoured, by an imperial order, to disgrace the memory of the officers who had perished in that fatal campaign. All, too, who were missing—that is, who were prisoners in France; a list which included some of the bravest men in the service—he caused to be broken as deserters. As to the captive soldiers, he abandoned them to their fate, and refused to adopt any means of promoting an exchange, or otherwise to alleviate the misery of their situation. One consolation only remained to him in the matter, and that arose from the belief that the reverses of Russia were solely brought about by the jealousy and treachery of the Austrians.

The disappointments of the emperor Paul, in connection with this campaign, did not end with the defeats and disasters experienced by his armies in Switzerland. He had recently concluded a treaty with England, by which he agreed to send a Russian force to co-operate with the British in an attack on the French in Holland. This country was selected for attack because, of all those in possession of republican France, it lay nearest to the shores of England, and also because its means of defence were inconsiderable. It was arranged that England should furnish 13,000, and Russia 17,000, men. Besides furnishing her complement of troops, England was to pay £44,000 per month for the expenses of the Russians, and to employ her whole naval force to support the operations. On the 13th of August, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who was entrusted with the chief command, sailed with the first division, consisting of 12,000 British troops embarked in transports, to join Lord Duncan, who was then cruising in the North Seas. The fort of the Helder was immediately abandoned by its garrison, and taken possession of by Abercrombie. The Dutch fleet also surrendered, and hoisted the Orange flag. General Brune, the French commander, with a force of 25,000 men, attacked the English, with the hope of dislodging them before the arrival of the Russians, but was repulsed with a loss of 2,000 men. Abercrombie was, nevertheless, left for a whole month in a very critical situation, but his inferior force resolutely stood its ground. In September the Russian army arrived, under General Hermann, and the remainder of the English force, accompanied by the Duke of York. From this time nothing went well; and every difficulty

which befel the English appeared in some strange way to arise from the shortcomings of the Russians. In the first battle that was fought after the junction of these ill-sorted allies, the English succeeded in driving back the French, and in taking all the villages that lay before them. This partial success was, however, neutralised by the reverses of the Russians. General Hermann's troops fell, after a short time, into confusion. The French, encouraged at the sight, assailed them furiously both in front and flank, and drove them, at the point of the bayonet, behind the allied intrenchments. The Russian general was taken prisoner; 3,500 of his men were killed or wounded, and twenty-six pieces of cannon and seven standards captured.

When this news reached the Duke of York, he withdrew his men from the pursuit of the enemy, and attempted to retrieve the misfortune of his allies. It was in vain; and after a sharp struggle, he was compelled to retire within the fortified lines.

Other engagements followed, not dishonourable to our troops, but disastrous in their results, and rather disgraceful in point of generalship. Every day the prospects of the allies became more hopeless; and the approach of the autumnal rains in a country so exposed to inundations that, in ancient times, it was doubted whether the inhabitants belonged to the land or to the sea, raised up new obstacles to the allies. By the 17th of October, the Duke of York, baffled in an attempt upon Haarlem, was induced to conclude a convention, by which it was agreed that the English and Russians should be allowed to embark without molestation, on condition that 8,000 prisoners of war, French and Batavians, taken before that campaign, and then prisoners of war, should be set at liberty.

The failure of this expedition under such ignoble circumstances, especially as regarded the Russians, and the scattering of the latter by their allies over Guernsey and Jersey, the inhabitants of which continually reminded them of their reverses, excited the irritable Paul almost to frenzy. He applied the most opprobrious terms to the coalition, of which he had been the most active member, and rudely treated the English and Austrian ambassadors at his court, refusing to confer with them, and expressing a desire that they should leave St. Petersburg. He even attributed the disasters in Holland to the English, as he









NAPOLEON I.



had before accused the Austrians of the unfortunate results of the campaign in Switzerland. Not satisfied with treating his allies with an insulting contempt, he even tacitly withdrew from the coalition without publishing his reasons for doing so. The sudden withdrawal of his troops from Italy—where Suwarrow, shortly before his death, had proposed to attempt, with the Austrians, a desperate scheme, with the object of repairing the calamities that had befallen him—happily broke up the alliance between Austria and Russia. Paul, in fact, saw, for the first time, that he had committed an error in assisting the

Austrians in Italy against the French. What he proposed to himself in this alliance was, the extinction of revolutionary and republican principles. What he actually, though, of course, unconsciously and unintentionally did, was to promote the interests of Austria in Italy, and thus disturb the balance of power on the very side on which he had interfered to correct it. Paul, therefore, when he perceived this, broke up the alliance abruptly, and, in the fury arising from a consciousness of error, extended his anger to every person in connection with it, against whom any excuse for contempt or punishment could be devised.

#### CHAPTER XLIV

PAUL, HAVING ABANDONED HIS ALLIES, CONCEIVES AN ADMIRATION FOR NAPOLEON; MALTA SURRENDERED TO THE ENGLISH; PAUL SEIZES THE BRITISH TRADING VESSELS IN THE RUSSIAN HARBOURS; MARITIME COALITION OF THE NORTHERN POWERS AGAINST ENGLAND; BATTLE OF COPENHAGEN; TERROR CAUSED BY THE TYRANNY OF PAUL; FORMATION OF A CONSPIRACY TO DEPOSE HIM; THE GRAND-DUKES ALEXANDER AND CONSTANTINE ARE ADMITTED TO IT; MURDER OF THE EMPEROR; ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER; DISSOLUTION OF THE NORTHERN COALITION; REFLECTIONS UPON THE DESIGN OF PAUL AND NAPOLEON ON THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN INDIA.

ANOTHER change had taken place in the government of France. Napoleon, on his return from Egypt in October, 1799, had overthrown the Directory, and attained the dignity of First Consul, or chief magistrate of France. He also aimed at the reconstruction of a monarchy; and, towards the end of January, 1800, removed from the palace of the Luxembourg to that of the Tuileries, into which royal residence he made his public entrance amidst the acclamations of the multitude.

Probably the emperor Paul divined the intentions of Napoleon, and saw that the great soldier would endeavour to raise, in his own person, a new monarchical dynasty upon the ruins of the ancient royalty of France. Doubtless Paul would have preferred that the sceptre should have remained in the hands of the Bourbons, than that it should pass into those of a military adventurer. Yet, to the mind of Paul, any form of government was better than a republic; any principles preferable to those of the revolution.

No sooner had Paul violated the compact into which he had entered with Austria

and with England, than a remarkable change took place in his feelings towards France. He appeared impressed with a sense of respect, if not of admiration, for Napoleon, and by no means indisposed to enter into a treaty of peace with France. This conduct was perfectly in accordance with the passionate and fickle nature of the northern autocrat. Napoleon was not slow to perceive and to profit by this change of sentiment on the part of Paul; for he was well aware of the immense importance of neutralising the hostility of Russia. An opportunity at once offered which enabled Napoleon to make a graceful advance towards conciliation. The English had refused to redeem the Russian soldiers, amounting to about six or seven thousand, who had been made prisoners in their service, and were then in captivity in France. Napoleon, therefore, set them free, without either exchange or ransom. He even went so far as to restore to them their arms and standards, and provide them with new clothing in the uniform of their respective regiments. In sending them back to their own country, he also forwarded a letter to



the Russian minister, saying, "that he was unwilling to suffer such brave soldiers as these Russians were, to remain longer away from their native land on account of the English." Such an act of courtesy necessarily led to expressions of warm acknowledgment on the part of the emperor, and to an interchange of friendly offices. Shortly afterwards the emperor addressed a letter to the illustrious Corsican, in which he wrote :—" Citizen, Chief Consul,—I do not write to you to discuss the rights of men or citizens; every country governs itself as it pleases. Whenever I see at the head of a nation a man who knows how to rule and how to fight, my heart is attracted towards him. I write to acquaint you of my dissatisfaction with England, who violates every article of the law of nations, and has no guide but her egotism and her interest. I wish to unite with you to put an end to the unjust proceedings of that government." This flattering letter led to a regular correspondence between the emperor and the chief consul; and the latter took advantage of it to nurse into being the naval convention which subsequently took place among the northern powers.

The recent allies of Paul were astonished at his caprice; but he was far too irritated against them to attach any importance to their opinions on such a point. Napoleon, now at liberty to direct his arms chiefly against the Austrians, inflicted a severe defeat upon them at the battle of Marengo (14th June, 1800); an event which wonderfully consolidated his power, and increased his influence over the minds of the people of France. The government of Naples was in imminent danger from the victorious troops of the republic; and the queen of that city went in person to St. Petersburg, and implored the intercession of the emperor with Napoleon on behalf of her little kingdom. Paul felt flattered by the application, and promised to use all his influence with the first consul for the attainment of her wishes. To give additional weight to his mediation, he sent Lowescheff, an officer of his household, to the court of the Tuileries. The envoy was received with extraordinary distinction; and, in reply to his application, Napoleon consented to spare Naples, and undertook alone to regulate the destinies of that kingdom. His first step with respect to it, was to close the ports of Naples and Sicily against English merchant vessels as well as ships of war.

While incidents like these created a good understanding between the first consul and the emperor, the breach between the latter and the English government was considerably widened. In the September of 1800, the French, who had been closely blockaded within the fortifications of Malta for two years, surrendered the island to the English, in whose possession it has since remained. Paul had caused himself to be elected grand-master of the almost extinct order of St. John, by the knights resident in Russia. He therefore put forth a claim to the sovereignty of the island, and asserted that the conquest of it by the English was an infringement of the convention of 1798; which, he said, contained a stipulation that the island should be given up to the order of St. John of Jerusalem. As no such stipulation was contained in the treaty, the demand that the island should be surrendered to Russia was refused.

Paul was furious, and at once proceeded to an act of most unwarrantable violence. He seized all the British vessels in the Russian harbours, amounting to nearly three hundred, together with their valuable cargoes. As to the crews, they were sent into the interior of Russia, and allowed only a few copecks\* each a day for their support. All the English property on shore, also, the emperor put under sequestration; and a few vessels at Narva having weighed anchor and escaped, he was so incensed, that he burnt the remainder. Not only were these outrages contrary to the usages of all civilised states, but they were in direct violation of an article in an existing treaty between Russia and England; by which it was expressly stipulated that, in the event of a rupture between the two powers, no embargo should be laid on the vessels of either, but that the merchants, on both sides, should be allowed a year to take away or dispose of their goods.

This flagrant proceeding on the part of Paul, was the first outbreak of that spirit of combination against England which was resolving itself into the shape of a maritime coalition of the northern powers. In the December of 1800, a maritime convention was completed, and signed by Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and, subsequently, by Prussia. By this, the right of search of neutral vessels, claimed and exercised by England, was declared to be an attempt

\* A copeck is something less in value than an English halfpenny.



against the sovereign rights of the several powers forming the confederacy; which promised to assemble a squadron of the four Baltic powers, to protect their merchant vessels, and resist any attempt at searching them.\*

The British government regarded this proceeding with jealousy and indignation. When George III. met the recently opened parliament, on the 2nd of February, 1801, he adverted, in his speech from the throne, to the unhappy course of events on the continent, and announced that a fresh storm was gathering in the north; that the court of St. Petersburg had already proceeded to commit outrages against the ships, property, and persons of his subjects; and that a convention had been concluded by that court with those of Copenhagen and Stockholm, the object of which was to renew their former engagement for re-establishing, by force of arms, a new code of maritime laws, inconsistent with the rights, and hostile to the best interests, of this country. He added, that he had taken the earliest measures to repel the aggressions of this hostile confederacy, and expressed his confidence that both houses of parliament would afford him effectual support in his firm determination to maintain to the utmost, against every attack, the naval rights and interests of his empire. Some members of the opposition recommended conciliatory measures, and even the suspension of the right of search, or a tacit assent to the principles of the armed neutrality, which the empress Catherine had first raised against us during the American war, and which the northern powers were now about to revive—hinting at the terrible consequences which might arise from the closing of the corn ports on the Baltic. Pitt expressed a regret that members of the legislature should increase the difficulties of the nation by starting doubts on the question of its right of search; observing, that it was singularly unfortunate that these gentlemen should first have begun to doubt when the enemy began to arm.

\* This coalition was mainly promoted by Napoleon, who, aiming at the destruction of the naval supremacy of England, contended for the maritime rights of the neutral powers of Europe, which he rested on the following principles:—1. The sea is the dominion of all nations. 2. The flag covers the merchandise. 3. A neutral ship may be visited by a belligerent vessel, to ascertain its flag and cargo, so far as to be satisfied that it carries no contraband goods. 4. Contraband goods are considered to be military stores only. 5. Neutral ships may be prevented from entering a place that is besieged, if the

Preparations were immediately made for sending the British fleet into the Baltic; and an order was issued for a general embargo on all vessels belonging to the confederation. Letters of marque were also issued; and so vigorously were they acted upon, that nearly one-half of the merchantmen of the northern powers were soon to be found in the British harbours. The English ministry perceived that our naval supremacy depended upon striking some decisive blow before the naval forces of the confederacy should be united. The Danes had distinguished themselves, ever since the beginning of the war with France, in carrying French goods and articles contraband, and had resisted or eluded the search whenever they were able to do so. The Danes, therefore, were selected as an example of the naval power of England, in the event of their refusing to accede to the terms it should dictate with respect to the northern coalition.

On the 12th of March, a fleet, consisting of eighteen sail-of-the-line and a number of frigates and smaller vessels, under the command of Admiral Sir Hyde Parker and Vice-admiral Lord Nelson, who acted in subordination to him, proceeded to the Baltic. As negotiation was preferred to war, Mr. Vansittart accompanied the squadron as plenipotentiary, with full powers to treat. He left the fleet in the Scaw, and proceeded in a frigate with a flag of truce to Copenhagen; but returned without success from his mission, which only served to stimulate the Danes, and give them time to augment their means of defence. Nelson disapproved of distant negotiation. He remarked, "The Dane should see our flag every moment he lifts up his head." Notwithstanding his representations, several days were dissipated in inactivity. On the 30th, however, the British fleet passed the Sound; and despite the batteries of Cronenberg Castle, anchored near Copenhagen. The naval battle which takes its name from that city, was fought on the 2nd of April, and declared by Nelson

blockade be real, and the entrance be evidently dangerous.—On the other hand, the English government peremptorily contended—1. That materials adapted for building ships, such as timber, hemp, tar, &c., were contraband goods. 2. That although a neutral ship had a right to go from a friendly port to an enemy's port, it could not traffic between one hostile port and another. 3. That neutral ships could not sail from the enemy's colony to the mother country. 4. That neutral powers had no right to have their merchant ships convoyed by ships of war; and that, if they did so, this would not exempt them from search.



to be the most dreadful affair, and the hardest fought battle he had ever witnessed. The victory of the British was purchased with the loss of 1,200 men; that of the Danes was estimated at 1,700 or 1,800, besides about 4,000 prisoners. Six line-of-battle ships and eight praams were taken; but all, except one of the former, were burnt. This success, together with an incident we shall shortly relate, broke up the northern coalition.

We have gone rather in advance of those events which are exclusively Russian, and must take a retrospective step in our narration. The alliance between Paul and Napoleon had warmed into something approaching to friendship. The English and Austrian ambassadors were dismissed from St. Petersburg; and Count Kalitscheff went to Paris as the ambassador of Russia, and was received with distinction. "France," said Napoleon, publicly, "can ally itself only with Russia, for Russia is mistress of the Baltic and Black Seas, and she holds the keys of India in her hands; the emperor of such a country is truly a great prince. Paul is eccentric, but he has at least a will of his own."

The emperor had, indeed, gone far beyond eccentricity; and his conduct towards those around him, and to all who had the misfortune to be subject to his authority, was daily assuming a more arbitrary and irrational aspect. Changeable in his moods, shifting constantly from one mad whim to another, he remained only resolute in vindictive severity, which increased as his growing fears magnified the natural hatred which surrounded him. So variable were his humours, that he sometimes encouraged one day the very actions for which he would inflict punishment the next. At length, not only his family, but the whole empire became aware that he had lost all command over his passions; and many persons charitably attributed his extravagant behaviour to insanity. At one period he conceived the project of taking the institution of Freemasonry under his special protection, and of placing himself at its head. He even proceeded so far in this matter, as to establish a committee to examine the acts and statutes of the Freemasons, with a view to revise their organisation. He, however, soon abandoned this scheme, for the purpose of connecting himself with the ancient and romantic order of the Knights of St. John of Malta. Then, completely reversing his in-

tentions, he prohibited all secret assemblies, and compelled the presidents of the lodges of the Masons to promise that they would not hold any meetings without his consent; in this manner, his promised protection was converted into oppression.

A state of things resembling a reign of terror prevailed at St. Petersburg, and arrests and banishments took place every day on the slightest pretences. Carts filled with prisoners constantly took the road to Siberia; and the unfortunate victims were seldom allowed time to settle their affairs, or even to provide the clothing necessary to guard against the rigours of the inclement region to which they were expelled. Not only banishment, but the fearful punishment of the knout, was decreed for the slightest faults, and sometimes inflicted where no fault whatever had been committed. No one, either man or woman, was safe for an hour; for the fury of the emperor was poured out indiscriminately on all classes and ranks of society. His hours of calmness became progressively rarer, and it is certain that he laboured under a mental irritability which narrowly bordered upon insanity. Napoleon afterwards declared, that he thought, "latterly, Paul was mad." Great probability was given to this supposition by the state papers and articles written by the despot, and published in the *St. Petersburg Gazette*. On one occasion he issued, through the medium of that journal, an invitation to the sovereigns of Europe to come to St. Petersburg and settle their disputes by a combat, with their ministers—Pitt, Thugut, Bernsdorf, and Talleyrand—as esquires. This strange whim was the result of the irritation produced in his mind by some English caricatures representing him as an idiot, which had been artfully sent him by Napoleon. Paul was, indeed, embittered against this country. Whenever despatches were presented to him from England, proposing terms of reconciliation, he contemptuously thrust them through with his penknife, and then returned them unopened.

Paul's own family were not exempt from the effects of his furious and ungovernable temper. The empress submitted patiently to all his caprices, though her place, as his wife, was supplied by the ugly and diminutive Mademoiselle Nelidof. Yet neither the empress nor her sons were able to avoid incurring the morbid suspicions of Paul. It was rumoured by persons of influence at



court, that he had said he would send the empress to Kalamagan in the government of Astracan, Alexander to the dismal fortress of Schlussemburg, and Constantine to the citadel of St. Petersburg. Whether or not Paul threatened this proceeding, it was felt by the distinguished persons alluded to, that he might at any time put it into practice, and that no carelessness to avoid offence would be a security against unmerited but severe punishment. This induced even the family of the emperor to share the growing feeling, that it was necessary to remove him from the exalted position he was so utterly unfit to fill.

It was conjectured by some persons, that the mental derangement of Paul was caused by the disappointment of an illicit passion which he entertained for the Countess Lapoukhin, a lady of the court, who wisely preferred an honourable marriage with a subject to the invidious distinction proposed to her by the emperor. The refusal of the lady threw him into such fits of rage, as were calculated to produce serious results even to himself, and rendered him dangerous to every person whose unpleasant duty it was to approach him. Many of his frantic acts were attributed to the suggestions of the Count Koutaisof, who, from his barber, had become his favourite and minister.\* The latter denied the imputation, and perhaps with truth, for court favourites are always exposed to accusations of that kind. Moreover, the elevation of this man, who was a Turk by birth, had given great offence to the nobility, and assisted in promoting the discontent which had become general amongst them. The caprices of Paul, however, wounded not only their pride, but their interests. As landed proprietors, they suffered greatly by the suspension of commercial intercourse with England. This consideration also pressed heavily upon the

mercantile classes, who feared to enter into any extensive speculations under a government at once so variable and insecure.

All these circumstances led to a result which it is not difficult to anticipate. A conspiracy was entered into amongst a number of officers and others, most of whom held important and confidential situations near the person of the emperor. Amongst them were Plato Zuboff, and his brothers, Valerian and Nicholas, who had all suffered loss and insult at the hands of Paul, but were then restored to favour; Generals Benningsen, Ouvaroff, and Jaschewel; and Colonels Tatarmoff and Jesselowitz. But the director and master-mind of the conspiracy was Count Pahlen, the military governor of St. Petersburg. He was an Esthonian by birth, and a man of a cold, crafty, and faithless nature. He had, to some extent, been the instrument of the severities of the emperor; but he hated a master whom he could not serve either with respect or safety to himself. The high character of Pahlen was such as to neutralise the suspicion of the emperor, should it be excited; while the suavity of his manners and the readiness of his speech were also calculated to disarm it. It is said that he had long entertained a wish to depose the despotic Paul, and to place the Grand-duke Alexander on the throne, in the hope of rising to the first place in the councils of the inexperienced monarch, or even to reign over the empire in his name. This is by no means improbable; but that which appears to have been the direct inducement for him to join the conspiracy, was his discovery that Paul intended to dismiss and disgrace him.

Count Pahlen proceeded with consummate art to provide for the success of the dangerous scheme in which he had embarked. It is presumed that the intention

\* Koutaisof was a Turk of low origin, who had been originally *valet-de-chambre* to Paul, and who so far won his favour, that he rose, at last, to be his confidant and minister. Such was the power which this man obtained over the emperor, that even the nobility, who detested him, bowed before his authority. Suwarrow alone, unaccustomed to the servility of courts, did not hesitate to humiliate him by the expression of his contempt. Paul had occasion one day to communicate with Suwarrow, and sent this favourite to the veteran to convey his commands. When the name of Count Koutaisof was announced, Suwarrow exclaimed, "Koutaisof! I do not know a Russian family of that name." Koutaisof replied, "that he was a Turk, and that the favour of the emperor had elevated

him to the dignity with which he was invested." "You have, without doubt," responded Suwarrow, "distinguished yourself in arms?" "I have never served in the field," answered Koutaisof. "Or in the ministry?" inquired Suwarrow. "I have not been charged with civil affairs," said Koutaisof, "I have always been placed near the person of the emperor." "Well, well," persevered the old general, "and in what capacity?" Koutaisof wished to turn the conversation, but the pitiless warrior pursued his questions, until he forced him to avow that he had been *valet-de-chambre*. Suwarrow then turned to his own servant, and said, "See, Ivan, what it is to conduct oneself well; this lord was once what thou art—behold him now decorated with a blue riband." —*Levesque*.



of those who were admitted to the secret, was to compel Paul to sign a deed of abdication, and that they had not any intention of murdering him. However that may be, Pahlen contrived to collect in St. Petersburg, and implicate in the plot, a number of persons who had sustained injuries from the emperor, and who were not likely to recoil from bloodshed. Pahlen also had the address to alienate from the favour of the doomed emperor all those courtiers whom he feared would be adverse to his design.

The masterpiece of Pahlen, however, consisted in implicating the Grand-dukes Alexander and Constantine in the conspiracy against their father. This was necessary for his safety; for if the plot failed, Pahlen's life would be sacrificed to the rage of Paul; and if it succeeded, he might yet fall a victim to the vengeance of Alexander. The latter danger would probably be removed if the future monarch shared the crime which was to place him on the throne. Pahlen, therefore, secretly excited the father against the sons, and then worked upon their fears to excite them against their father. He represented to the grand-dukes that he was labouring for their welfare, and urged that their safety and that of the empire required that the insanity of the emperor should be restrained from producing any further injury to the public interests. He spoke no word which implied that any violence was intended towards Paul, and dwelt upon the emperor's assumed intention of placing his sons in confinement. The princes both recoiled from any active participation in the conspiracy; but they felt the cogency of Pahlen's arguments, and consented that their father should be compelled to abdicate. Alexander concurred so far, that he signed the proclamation announcing his own assumption of the reins of government two hours before the consummation of the conspiracy.

When so many persons were admitted to the plot, it is not surprising that some rumours of it reached the ears of the emperor, whose miserable fears made him suspect every one who approached him to be an assassin. Sending for Pahlen, Paul acquainted him with his apprehensions, and desired him to spare no means of informing himself of all the facts of the case. The astute minister replied calmly, "Sire, I know it all; and, in order to assure myself of the guilty, I am myself a conspirator."

The apparent openness of this answer pacified the emperor, and induced him to confide in the presumed integrity and vigilance of his minister. It was not long, however, before he received more explicit information, and he then suspected that Pahlen had taken a real and not a feigned part in the conspiracy. Under this impression, he wrote to Araktcheief, the former governor of St. Petersburg, then commanding some trusty troops at a distance of forty versts from the capital, desiring his immediate presence, and expressing a belief that he had been betrayed by Pahlen. The latter, aware of every movement that took place at the palace, arrested the courier, and, opening his despatches, saw that his only chance of escaping destruction, lay in carrying the design against Paul into immediate operation. The next day was accordingly fixed for its accomplishment.

The time thus necessarily adopted was a favourable one, for it was the period of the *Maslanitza*, or Russian carnival, when the whole population surrender themselves to festivity. An hour before midnight, about twenty of the conspirators presented themselves at the side door of the palace which opened on the gardens. They were at first refused admission by the sentry; but on representing to the man that they had been sent for by the emperor, who intended that night to hold a council of war, and knowing most of them to be officers of rank, he allowed them to pass. Silently ascending the staircase, they advanced cautiously to the antechamber. Then Argamakoff, the aide-de-camp in waiting, who had entered into the design, went forward alone. The Cossack on guard he deceived by saying that there was a fire in the city, and that he came to awaken the emperor. The Cossack permitted him to pass, and Argamakoff knocked at the door of the royal apartment, and announced his name. Paul was in bed; but, knowing the voice, he opened the door by means of a cord attached to it for that purpose. No sooner had he done so, than the other conspirators crowded into the antechamber. A conviction of their intended purpose flashed across the mind of the guard, who shouted, "Treason!" He had no time to give the alarm further; for the confederated officers instantly cut him down, and then rushed into the chamber of the emperor. They found the bed empty, and some exclaimed that the despot had escaped. "That is impossible," said Gene-



ral Benningsen, who feared that at this critical moment the irresolution of some of his associates might lead to their common destruction. Turning to them, he exclaimed threateningly, "No weakness, or I will put you all to death." Then, putting his hand on the bedclothes, and feeling them warm, he added, that the emperor could not be far off. Almost immediately afterwards, Paul was perceived crouching behind a screen, from which ineffectual hiding-place he was dragged by the resolute general. Just before the entrance of the conspirators, the trembling despot had seized a sword, and attempted, in his night-dress, to gain a private staircase, from which he could have effected his escape. It was too late; but now, though detected, and brought face to face with those whom he must have regarded as his intended assassins, he confronted them in a bold and manly manner. Passion and excitement gave him for the time a courage which he did not ordinarily possess. Turning on some of those present, on whom he had conferred his capricious favours, he reproached them bitterly as traitors and ingrates. Heedless of his anger, Plato Zuboff read to him the act of abdication that had been prepared, and required him to sign it instantly. Paul refused, saying, that "he was emperor, and would remain emperor;" and then burst into a torrent of invectives against Zuboff in particular. The latter coolly informed him that he was no longer emperor, and called upon him to surrender in the name of the czar Alexander. Paul, bursting with passion, struck at Zuboff; and the conspirators, dismayed by this boldness drew back and hesitated.

It was a critical moment; for the life of the despot trembled in one scale, that of the

conspirators in the other. Their veneration of the imperial authority, and the habit of passive submission to it, was regaining its influence over most of them. The arrival of a few persons faithful to the czar would have struck panic into these lawless avengers of the sufferings of an empire; even the merest accident might have effectually awed the conspirators, and saved the miserable autocrat, who, with his hideous face distorted with excitement, and livid from the conflicting emotions of rage and terror, glared at them like a wild beast at bay. A distant shout, or the sound of approaching footsteps towards that fatal chamber where stood the living emperor whose moments were numbered, might have rescued him. It was not to be; there was at least, among the conspirators, one whose resolution was undaunted; and his spirit reanimated the rest. This was General Benningsen, who reminded them that, if Paul escaped, an inevitable death upon the scaffold awaited them.

This observation roused the confederates to a sense of their position, and awakened in them that resolution which commonly springs from a sense of danger. Nicholas Zuboff instantly rushed upon the emperor, and, by a single blow, broke his right arm. His example was immediately followed, and the other conspirators threw themselves upon Paul. Excited to frenzy, he fought with them furiously; but such an unequal struggle was necessarily of brief duration. Overpowered, exhausted, and covered with blood, he fell to the ground. In this position a sash was hurriedly passed round his neck, and his agony terminated by strangulation. His last words were, "And you, too, my Constantine!"\* The wretched tyrant fancied that his own son was among his

\* Considerable differences exist amongst the various narrations concerning the details of the death of Paul; but where all the witnesses had an interest in concealing the particulars, it can scarcely be expected that every account should coincide. One account was given by the soldier who guarded the ante-room to the bedchamber of Paul; for the man, though cut down, was not killed by the conspirators, and was afterwards taken by the empress into her protection. It is not, however, likely that this man, faint from the loss of blood, and fearing for his own life, was in a condition to be very accurately acquainted with proceedings which took place in the next apartment. All accounts, however, though differing in detail, agree as to the main facts; and we have endeavoured to attain as much correctness in the relation of these as the evidence of the best accessible authorities would enable us. It is stated by some writers, that Paul, from the moment he

saw the conspirators until they broke out into violence, did not utter a single word, but fell into a sort of stupor, from whence he was awakened by Prince Tatchwill, the major-general of artillery, who, inflamed with wine, came in with several of his companions; and, finding Benningsen and seven or eight of his friends standing motionless in the room, furiously attacked the emperor, and, overturning the lamp, involved the apartment in darkness. In the struggle that followed, Benningsen, according to this authority, is said to have repeatedly urged Paul not to attempt to escape or to defend himself, as he feared his life would be the penalty; and, throughout the whole scene, Benningsen did not take any more active part. Having left the room to procure a light, he found Paul, on his return, lying on the ground strangled. The only resistance which Paul is said, by this account, to have made, was putting his hand between his neck and the sash, and ex-



murderers. It has been denied that the grand-duke was present, or even aware that the project in which he was implicated would have so tragical a termination. For the honour of human nature we trust that such was the case. It is difficult to entertain a spark of pity for the despot, whose cruelties had rendered him unfit to live, and whose violent death we regard with no more emotion than we should that of a wolf, or other beast of prey. But that his own son should have been present amongst the assassins, and assisted to extinguish that life from which he derived his own, would have been a circumstance both unnatural and appalling. The incident has been explained, and we are willing to believe truthfully so, by the statement that the bewildered emperor took one of the conspirators for the grand-duke on account of a similarity in their dress.

Thus perished Paul, on the night of the 23rd of March, 1801,\* at the age of forty-seven, after a brief reign of four years and nearly five months.†

The subtle and unprincipled Count Pahlen, who had been the animating principle of the conspiracy, was not present during the murder of the emperor. With a prudent but profound and dishonourable duplicity, he had placed himself at the head of a regiment of guards, prepared either to congratulate his accomplices on their good fortune in the event of their success, or to represent himself as the deliverer of Paul should the autocrat have escaped.

While the conspirators were engaged with Paul, his eldest son, the Grand-duke Alexander, remained in a room below, expecting to receive the news of his father's arrest and deposition. Whether he anticipated, as he reasonably might have done, the dark result of the design, or had heard

the noise arising from the struggle, and thus guessed that his parent had been assassinated, we are unable to say. But on the return of the conspirators, he eagerly demanded of them, whether the life of his father had been spared? On receiving a reply in the negative, he tore his hair, and, uttering passionate expressions of sorrow, refused, for a short time, to allow himself to be nominated to the succession. This emotion might have been sincere; but we must confess to a suspicion of its hollowness. The admirers or adulators of Alexander have given him the credit of being both humane and affectionate. Emperors, however, are never in want of flatterers, who are ready to argue even their weaknesses or crimes into virtues; and a profound judge of human character, who afterwards knew Alexander well, pronounced him to be both false and cunning.‡

The news of the sudden death of the emperor, whom a complaisant court physician pronounced to have died of apoplexy, soon spread through the city, and was received with acclamations and expressions of unbounded joy. So intolerable had the tyranny of Paul become, that his death was everywhere felt as a relief, and the people, army and nobles, were unanimous in their congratulations and rejoicings. To such an extent was this carried, that a stranger might have supposed some great festival to be in course of celebration. Assembling beneath the windows of the palace, the populace rent the air with shouts, mingled with the name of Alexander. These demonstrations induced him to abandon all idea of refusing to accept the title of emperor; if, indeed, he seriously entertained it. It was evident that an attempt to revenge the death of his father might have resulted in a revolution; for so great was the joy of

claiming in French, "Gentlemen, for heaven's sake, spare me! leave me time to pray to God!" which were his last words. There are many reasons for questioning the truth of this account. It is inconsistent with the violent character of Paul, who might reasonably be supposed to reproach his assassins with the favours he had bestowed upon them; and it is equally inconsistent with the part which General Benningsen took in the affair, having that night supped at General Talizin's with Pahlen and the other leaders, and undertaken, with the energy which is known to have distinguished him, the bold office of heading the party at the palace.

\* Some accounts say, that Paul was murdered on the 24th of March, not the 23rd. As it was about midnight when the event took place, it has been referred by some narrators to the following day.

† Paul left ten children, all the offspring of his second wife, the Princess of Wurtemberg. Their names and the dates of their births are as follows:—Alexander, born 23rd December, 1777; Constantine, born 1779; Alexandrina, born 1783, married to Joseph, palatine of Hungary; Helena, born 1784, married to Frederic, prince of Mecklenburg-Strelitz; Maria, born 1786, married to Charles, grand-duke of Saxe-Weimar; Catherine, born 1788, married first to Prince George of Holstein Oldenburg, secondly to William I., king of Wurtemberg; Olga, born 1792; Anne, born 1795, married to William II., king of Holland; Nicholas, born 1796; Michael, born 1798.

‡ The emperor Napoleon I. Indeed, even the panegyrists of Alexander admit that he was a profound dissembler.



the people, that they were with difficulty restrained from hailing the regicides as the saviours of the empire. Shortly afterwards, a deputation of the nobility, the officials and the magistrates of the city, waited on Alexander, and tendered him their allegiance. At the same time, Count Pahlen, who headed the deputation, read an address, representing the indispensable necessity of a total change of policy on the part of the new emperor.

Little need be said respecting the character of Paul, which has, perhaps, been sufficiently revealed by our narrative. It is, moreover, not agreeable to dwell on a picture which is all storm and shadows. He has been said to have occasionally exhibited traits of humanity; but we are, after patient reflection, at a loss to discover them. He visited and pardoned Kosciuszko for a whim, and because the patriot had been condemned to imprisonment by the empress Catherine, whose commands Paul ever loved to reverse. He also degraded poor officers by an ostentatious gift of *food*! which the management of the army ought never to have permitted them to want. This was eccentricity, not humanity; for Paul abundantly proved that he was destitute of all gentle and kindly emotions. His tyranny was intolerable, and his cruelty petty, harassing, and incessant. He did not resemble the lion who rends and slays, but the reptile which stings and poisons. He delighted to terrify his subjects, and to make them feel the weight of his authority. Sometimes a touch of grim humour was mingled with his caprice or anger. On one occasion, while engaged in private conversation with a nobleman of his court, the emperor, without any provocation, gave him a sound box on the ear, saying at the same time, "This salutation with my hand Paul," in punning allusion to one of the epistles of his namesake the apostle. The vanity of the emperor was gigantic, his arrogance unbounded. In that direction the irritability of his mind appears to have passed the bounds of disorder, and become disease. The reverence which he commanded to be observed towards him, was such as it is only becoming in men to pay to the Deity. Capricious in all things, he never adhered to any principle of policy, or to any purpose. Narrow in his intellect, he viewed every subject through the medium of personal feelings. He even considered an event or alliance as acceptable, or otherwise, according as it pleased him, and not as it

affected the interests of the empire. As Napoleon observed, he had a will of his own, and a resolute one; but it must be added, that he was utterly destitute of the judgment requisite to direct it. To his capricious and petty cruelty, he added a treachery which he commonly visited upon those whom he led to believe he had regarded as friends. No one could trust him; no one could depend upon his humour even from one hour to another. His activity was remarkable, especially in mischief; and, indeed, he was employed in little else. His motives were little, and his actions mean and unkingly. His nature was a mixture of the military martinet and the inquisitorial police-officer. His oppression was of a puerile character, and might have been regarded as ridiculous, but for the serious consequences resulting from it. A furious war against round hats, lapelled waistcoats, or Russian harness, might seem, though irritating, to be absurd; but these proceedings take a very different complexion when we learn that people were punished with merciless severity, even to the extent of being exiled for life to the wilds of Siberia, for even accidentally infringing the whimsical edicts of the emperor on these points. Paul had a passion for remodelling everything; yet it may be safely said that he improved nothing. Everything he did was of a petty and pragmatistical kind; the people, the army, the legislature, the press, all bitterly felt the pressure of his innovating hand. Indeed, his reforms, or rather changes, always produced more evil than that which they were occasionally intended to effect. We say occasionally, because he often commanded extensive alterations to be made in the machinery of the state, without condescending to assign any reason whatever; if, in fact, he possessed any. It was his *will*, and he expected and enforced an unquestioning obedience. In brief, if the emperor Paul is to be regarded as accountable for his actions, he must be pronounced as the worst and meanest despot of modern times; insignificant but for his despotic fury, and never even great in crime. If, on the other hand, we acquit him of his crimes against society on the plea of insanity, we must deplore that fatal form of government which is ever liable to invest a maniac with absolute and uncontrollable power over the largest empire in the world.

To these remarks of our own, we will append the following observations from the



pen of Count Ségur, the French ambassador at St. Petersburg during a portion of the latter part of the reign of the empress Catherine. The count, possessing the suavity of a courtier who had frequently seen and conversed with the autocrat, was evidently influenced by a desire to render his sketch as devoid of repulsive features as a strict regard for truth would permit. He says\*—“With much wit and information, the Grand-duke Paul possessed the most restless and suspicious temper, the most changeable character. He was often affable to the extreme of familiarity; oftener harsh, despotic, and haughty. Never, perhaps, did there exist a man more uncertain, timid, or capricious; less calculated, in short, for imparting happiness to others or to himself.

“His reign bore evidence of this. The many acts of injustice which he committed, the disgrace or banishment of so many persons, are not to be ascribed to a wicked disposition (?) but to a kind of mental malady. He was the torment of all who approached him, because he was his own torment. He always fancied that the throne was encompassed with precipices. Fear disturbed his judgment; through his constant apprehension of imaginary evils, he gave rise to real ones; for, sooner or later, a monarch never fails to communicate to others the terror to which he is a prey, and the mistrust which he harbours in his heart.

“At a later period, one of my colleagues in the chamber of peers, who was at St. Petersburg during the reign of Paul, quoted to me some of his expressions, that bore the deepest stamp of his despotic character. Having allowed General Dumouriez to call frequently to see him, and the general having one day omitted to appear at the palace, the emperor asked him, the next time he presented himself, whether he had been unwell. ‘No, sire,’ replied Dumouriez; ‘but having been invited to dine by one of the most important personages of your court, I could not excuse myself from accepting the invitation.’ ‘I would have you to know, sir,’ rejoined the emperor, in a severe tone of voice, ‘that there is not any person of importance here except the one I may be addressing, and so long as I am addressing him.’ Is it possible for the pride of power and the contempt of mankind to be carried to greater lengths!

“In the early days of my arrival in Russia, this prince had shown such a warm

attachment to me, that it bore the appearance of infatuation. This fancy did not last long; it turned to indifference, when he found that the empress, his mother, honoured me with marks of kindness, and admitted me into her intimacy. For a long time past he had ceased to express any wish for a renewal of my intercourse with him; but at the moment of my departure, a fresh caprice of his mind procured me a return of confidence. He conversed with me for several hours, and to the exclusion of almost every other subject, respecting his pretended causes of complaint against the empress and the Prince Potemkin, the unpleasantness of his situation, the dread in which he was held, and the melancholy fate he had to expect from a court accustomed to suffer and allow no other reign but that of women: he was intimidated by the reflection of his father’s deplorable end; it was constantly in his thoughts, and was the settled idea of his mind.

“In vain I urged that his prejudices deceived him; that, so far from fearing him, his mother always left him at liberty to hold his court without any interference on her part, and even to retain near him, at a short distance from Czarskozeło, two battalions, the officers of which were of his own nominating, which he trained, armed, and clothed at will; whilst his mother, banishing all apprehension, only kept one company of her guard near her person. ‘If this princess, monseigneur,’ I said, ‘does not call you to her councils, and gives you no share in public affairs, allow me to observe, that it would be very difficult for her to act otherwise; aware, as she is, that you find fault with her inclinations, her connections, her system of administration, and her political conduct. As to the evils which you dread by anticipation, rest assured that your fears contribute to raise them; show yourself superior to them, and they will infallibly disappear.’ I did not succeed in persuading him; and, by incessantly recriminating against the ministers and all who were honoured with the confidence of the empress, he was endeavouring to prove to me, that, notwithstanding my five years’ residence in Russia, I was very imperfectly acquainted with his character. ‘Explain, in short,’ said the prince to me on one occasion, ‘why, in the European monarchies, sovereigns quietly reign and succeed each other, whilst the throne of Russia is so often stained with blood?’

\* *Memoirs and Recollections.*



“‘I see no difficulty, monseigneur,’ I replied, ‘in tracing the cause of all those catastrophes; and, no doubt, it has not escaped your observation. Everywhere else the peace of nations and the tranquillity of kings is secured by the inheritance to the throne in the male line. This is the important difference existing between the ancient Asiatic, Roman, Greek, and barbarian monarchies, and the modern ones; the progress of civilisation may, perhaps, be ascribed to this stability. Here, on the contrary, there is nothing fixed on the subject; everything is open to doubt; and the sovereign selects any successor he pleases. Hence you have a perpetual source of ambitious hopes, of intrigues and conspiracies.’

“‘I acknowledge it,’ he rejoined, ‘but where is the remedy to be found? With us, the habit is of long standing, a sanctioned custom; and an alteration in so important a point could never be effected without danger to the innovator; for, I repeat it, the Russians prefer seeing a gown rather than an uniform upon the throne.’—‘Nevertheless, I am of opinion, monseigneur,’ I continued, ‘that this happy revolution might be brought about at some signal epoch of a new reign, such as a solemn entry, a coronation, when the people’s minds are open to confidence, to pleasure, and to hope.’

“‘I can well conceive it,’ he said, embracing me; ‘this might be attempted; I must reflect upon it.’

“I thought no more of the subject; and he, perhaps, equally forgot it. When, however, on his ascending the throne a few years afterwards, Paul established, as a fundamental law, the hereditary succession to the throne in the male line and in the order of primogeniture, it occurred to me that our conversation might have contributed in operating this memorable change in Russian legislation.”

The assassination of Paul, and the subsequent triumph of the British fleet at the

battle of Copenhagen, dissolved that formidable coalition of the northern powers which was entered into to destroy the maritime supremacy of this country. Napoleon was greatly irritated at the unexpected death of Paul, and the events which so rapidly followed it. So much so, that he publicly implied, and probably himself believed, that the murder of the emperor was brought about by the influence of England. “Paul I,” said Napoleon, in announcing the event to the French people, “died on the night of the 23rd of March. The English fleet passed the Sound on the 30th. History will unveil the connection which may have existed between these events.”\* The French papers followed the example of the emperor, and contended that the English ministry was privy to the conspiracy; the success of which, and the murder of the emperor, was, they said (though we certainly do not see by what means), necessary to the success of the English expedition against Denmark. It is now generally admitted that these assertions were merely idle calumnies. Assuredly, a British fleet, with the illustrious Nelson on board of it, did not stand in need of Russian conspirators to enable it to procure a victory over an inferior power. Paul’s death was the natural result of his tyranny; and it is only to be wondered at that his capricious despotism was borne so long as it was by a nobility to whom the assassination of an emperor was no novelty. Napoleon’s acute minister, Talleyrand, endeavoured to pacify him, by observing, that “this was the customary mode of abdication in Russia.”

Napoleon’s regret for the death of Paul arose from the partiality which the latter had recently shown towards him, and the desire he had evinced to promote the interests of France. But the first consul was further irritated by the consequent abandonment of the northern alliance against the maritime supremacy of England, and also

\* Alison observes—“In truth, there was a connection, and an intimate one, between them, though not of the kind insinuated by the first consul. The connection was that between flagrant misgovernment and Oriental revolution. In every country, how despotic soever, there is some restraint on the power of government. When oppression or tyranny has reached a certain height, a spirit of resistance is inevitably generated, which leads to convulsions; and this is the case in Oriental as in European monarchies; in the age of Nero as in that of James II. It is the highest glory of representative governments, to have given a constitutional direction to this necessary element in the social system; to have con-

verted a casual and transitory burst of vengeance into a regular and pacific organ of improvement; to have substituted a hostile vote in the national assembly for the dagger or the bowstring; and, instead of the revolution of the seraglio, introduced the steady opposition of the British parliament. In Russia, this important element was unknown. No regular or useful check upon the authority of government existed; the will of the czar was omnipotent. Measures the most hurtful might emanate from the palace without any constitutional means of redress existing; and if the conduct of the emperor had risen to a certain degree of extravagance, no means of arresting it existed but his destruction.”



of a wild scheme which he had formed in conjunction with Paul, of marching a combined French and Russian army to India, with the object of overthrowing the dominion of Britain in that vast and wealthy peninsula. We entirely concur in the opinion that the abandonment of this project was far more fortunate for France and Russia than it was for England. We believe that, in consequence of the tremendous natural obstacles to be overcome, the successful accomplishment of such a scheme is utterly impracticable. Nor do we attribute much weight to the fact, that so great a general as Napoleon thought otherwise. We think that, intoxicated by a career of brilliant successes, he had come to believe that it was almost impossible that he could fail in any enterprise to the accomplishment of which he devoted himself. His faith in the resources of France, in the spirit and military genius of the French people, and in the paramount ascendancy of "his star" or destiny, was unbounded. Yet, in his subsequent invasion of Russia, these failed him in the most tragical manner; and we regard that project as one of far less danger and difficulty than his contemplated march to India, where, if the French and Russian troops ever arrived at all, it would be to encounter, in a state of exhaustion and misery, a succession of British armies well supplied with every requisite for field service, and fresh for conflict. If the reader will refer to an atlas, and trace in the maps of Europe and Asia the proposed line of progress of the allied armies to India, we think that he will agree with us, that the enterprise would have proved fatal to all who embarked in it. Fears have even recently been entertained of Russian ambition in that direction; but it requires not the mantle of a prophet to predict, that should so wild a project ever be attempted, India would prove the grave—and one from which resurrection would be more than doubtful—of the *prestige* of Russian statesmanship and military distinction.

This was the plan which received the sanction of the great Napoleon; but which, from the gigantic—we believe insurmountable—difficulties surrounding it, has more the appearance of having been concocted by the driveller Paul:—

"A French army, 35,000 strong, with light artillery, under the command of Massena, shall be moved from France to Ulm, whence, with the consent of Austria, it shall descend the Danube to the Black Sea.

"Arrived there, a Russian fleet will transport it to Taganrog; thence it shall move to Tzaritzin on the Volga, where it will find boats to convey it to Astracan.

"There it will find a Russian army of 35,000 men, composed of 15,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, and 10,000 Cossacks, amply provided with artillery, and the horses necessary for its conveyance.

"The combined army shall be transported by the Caspian Sea, from Astracan to Astrabad, where magazines of all sorts shall be established for its use.

"The march from the frontiers of France to Astrabad will be made in eighty days; fifty more will be requisite to bring the army to the banks of the Indus, by the route of Herat, Felah, and Candahar."

The most remarkable feature of this strange project is, the perfect complacency with which it utterly ignores difficulties of a more gigantic and threatening character than have ever been surmounted, or even attempted, by any modern military power. The intended allied army of 70,000 men would be strangely inefficient for the accomplishment of so vast an end as that proposed; even supposing it to be practicable. It is more than probable that 70,000 men would be utterly consumed in the sickness, sufferings, and privations of this complicated progress. To supply such a force with provisions, even to Astrabad, would be a work of transcendent difficulty; but the maintenance of it from that point to the banks of the Indus, through Persia and Afghanistan, where it would constantly be assailed by fierce and hostile forces, would be scarcely short of miraculous. Should this have been overcome by any wonderfully arranged commissariat, the troops, especially the Russians, would have perished in swarms from the effects of a climate which is terribly fatal to men who have been cradled in the snows of the north. It was the climate which defeated Peter the Great when he penetrated into Persia; and a terrible sickness devastated and paralysed the army sent there by Catherine.

Even the very first steps of the French army, before it joined that of Russia, would be beset with difficulties. It was to descend the Danube, "with the consent of Austria," though it was, undoubtedly, the interest of Austria to withhold that consent. The emperor, who was an ally of England, might have withheld his consent; but supposing him to have given it, it must be remem-



bered, that the greatest portion of the Danube runs through the dominions of the sultan. His consent, therefore, must have been obtained also: and as the invasion of India was to be conducted in defiance of Turkey, there is little doubt that, in the progress down the Danube to the Black Sea, considerable opposition would have to be encountered. During this time, it is scarcely possible that England would remain in inaction, and passively behold the preparations that were being made to wrest from her a vast territory, the loss of which, especially if taken from her by France and Russia, would have materially lowered her reputation as a first-rate European power. Presuming, as we think under the circumstances we are warranted in doing, that the Porte admitted a British fleet into the Black Sea for the purpose of intercepting that of Russia, encumbered with 70,000 troops, and heavily laden with artillery, horses, and stores—the result of such a conflict as would certainly follow, could scarcely be doubtful, even if Nelson had not been appointed to command the British men-of-war. At the time of which we are writing the spirit of England was unbounded, its resources seemingly inexhaustible, the extent of its influence almost miraculous, and its wrath terrible. Its resources, and consequently its influence, are now far greater; and if the indomitable spirit of its people seems to have deteriorated, we suspect that is because prolonged wars have not aroused in them that strong sense of nationality and military ardour which existed in times of difficulty and danger. It is scarcely a metaphor to say, that England has held her own against a world in arms; nor too much to predict, that the power of Russia, even with that of France at its back, could never wrest India from her iron grasp. If that vast and grand peninsula, extending from the luxuriant and verdant plains of Cape Comorin to the snow-clad mountains of the Himalaya and the savage wilds of Tartary, and blessed by nature with all the treasures of the roseate East, be ever lost to England, it will not be in consequence of foreign interpolation—not from the bayonets and cannon of Russia and France; but from English mismanagement, false security, and wilful misunderstanding of the native character—from an unjust interference with ancient usages, and an ungenerous and insane attempt insidiously to force upon the Hindoos and Mohammedans

of that burning clime, a religion to which they entertain not only a repugnance, but a hatred. England might, though we do not believe she ever will, lose India in consequence of a succession of well-organised rebellions against her authority—rebellions provoked by her own dogmatic intolerance and want of faith towards her swarthy subjects; but we are satisfied that it can never be torn from her by any European power or confederacy.

In the above remarks we have referred only to the difficulties which, in the plan proposed by Paul and Napoleon, would beset the allied Russian and French armies in their progress to the banks of the great river Indus. Assuming the journey had been made, at this point the toils and dangers of the expedition would appear to begin again. In Soinde or the Punjaub, the invaders, if they had survived the sufferings of the progress, would have to meet the armies of Britain. Let us admit that it is even possible that they might gain a battle, yet it is certain that it would be purchased at a cost scarcely less disastrous than that of a defeat. This would be a position in which even the victories of the invaders would destroy them piecemeal. Certainly, much would depend upon the natives; if favourable to the invaders, it would be a great assistance to them; but if these races, the most warlike in all India, were ill-disposed towards the new-comers, it would probably lead eventually to the destruction of the latter. But there is little reason to suppose that the native population would regard the advance of a European army with emotions of satisfaction. The progress of great bodies of troops through the towns and villages of a country not their own, is seldom regarded otherwise than with aversion by the inhabitants. Cases of spoliation are sure to occur, more especially so with an army in the gaunt arms of famine. Provisions are purchased at any price the strongest please to pay for them; robberies ensue; and women are insulted, or worse. The inevitable result is a hostile and even vindictive population; the removal of provisions to secret places; the desertion of villages; and the murder of all stragglers from the ranks of the troops. All these things considered, we are disposed to conclude that the successful invasion of India, from the side of Russia, would be an impossibility; and it is generally admitted that it could not be assailed



by a European power in any other direction.

Even those who contend for the practicability of a Russian invasion of India, admit that the probability of achieving such a conquest must not be confounded with its likelihood. They acknowledge that it would take Russia so long a period to mature her plans, that they could not escape detection; and the interval would be employed in strengthening the frontiers of India. They add, however, that the wiser and easier course would be, to prevent the presumed invasion by securing the independence of those Asiatic nations that lie between the Russian possessions and the Indus. Other writers consider, that the advance of Russia to India would present no insuperable difficulties, if she could but obtain possession of Constantinople. We do not coincide in that opinion; and there is, moreover, so significant a meaning in that little word *if*! The Turks are by no means so powerless a people as many political writers are in the habit of representing them; and though history shows them to be unequal to sustain singly, without heavy disadvantages, a prolonged contest with Russia, yet recent events have shown that the great powers of Europe are now fairly aroused to the necessity of checking any further encroachment by Russia on the Turkish territory. The independence of the Ottoman empire is now recognised as a European necessity, nor could a balance of power be maintained without it. If Constantinople was in the possession of Russia, a vital injury would be inflicted upon the commerce of England, which would thus have a private as well as a public and general interest in preventing such a result. The interest of France in rescuing the city of the sultan from the hostile advances of Russia, is not so immediately apparent; yet that power cannot be unconcerned at any event that

\* Napoleon, in his exile, frequently referred to this subject. In O'Meara's work (*Napoleon in Exile*), he is represented, as saying—"Alexander's thoughts are directed to the conquest of Turkey. We have had many discussions about it. At first, I was pleased with his proposals; because I thought it would enlighten the world to drive those brutes, the Turks, out of Europe. But when I reflected upon the consequences, and saw what a tremendous weight of power it would give to Russia, in consequence of the number of Greeks in the Turkish dominions who would naturally join the Russians, I refused to consent to it, especially as Alexander wanted to get Constantinople, which I would not allow, as it would have destroyed the equilibrium of power in Europe. I reflected that France would gain Egypt, Syria, and the islands, which would

would disturb the balance of power. A French writer observes—"The hero of Austria, at the head of France—of the empire—did not dare to abandon Constantinople to the pacific Alexander."\*

A modern tourist, who has written a pleasant and useful book on the capital of Russia and its inhabitants,† observes—"There is one subject which, from time to time, is repeated in England as an alarm-bell to rouse the nation against the power of Russia, which is the apprehension of an attack from that quarter upon our Indian possessions; but I hear nothing from the most sanguine advocates of Russian aggrandisement, which would make me think that sensible men ever seriously entertained the idea of such an impracticable project. I have seen Russian officers who have lately travelled into the country which separates their farthest provinces from our Indian frontier, and all agree in their description of the dangers and difficulties attendant on such a journey, even for a private individual, much more for a numerous army. Some reasoners go farther, and pretend to wish that we should even advance our Indian outposts towards their province of Cabool, in order that we might meet amicably at that distant point, and co-operate mutually in promoting an overland communication from thence with Europe, which would ensure to them the benefits of carrying a trade through Russia, and would be of great advantage to those English who are established on that boundary of our Indian empire. I listen, however, with caution to any expression from that quarter, of a wish that we should extend our influence and power in any shape. On the other hand, if war should ever be declared between the two countries, there is hardly a doubt that the scene of action will be in the East, though not in the direction of India."

have been nothing in comparison with what Russia would have obtained. I considered that the barbarians of the North were already too powerful; and probably, in course of time, would overwhelm all Europe, as I now think they will. Austria already trembles; Russia and Prussia united, Austria falls, and England cannot prevent it. France, under the present family (*i.e.*, the Bourbons), is nothing; Austria can offer but little resistance to the Russians, who are brave and potent. Russia is the more formidable because she can never disarm: in Russia, once a soldier always a soldier—barbarians who, one may say, have no country, and to whom every country is better than the one that gave them birth." Such were the latest opinions of the great political seer.

† *A Visit to St. Petersburg in the Winter of 1829-'30*; by Thomas Raikes, Esq.



## CHAPTER XLV.

ACCESSION OF ALEXANDER I.; HE INCLINES TO LIBERAL MEASURES, AND PROMISES TO GOVERN ON THE PRINCIPLES OF CATHERINE II.; ADOPTS A PACIFIC POLICY TOWARDS ENGLAND, AND ADMITS THE RIGHT OF SEARCH UNDER CERTAIN LIMITATIONS; CONSEQUENT ABANDONMENT OF THE NORTHERN COALITION; TEMPORARY PEACE BETWEEN FRANCE AND ENGLAND; REFORMS BY ALEXANDER; GEORGIA IS ANNEXED TO RUSSIA; ALEXANDER INTERFERES IN THE AFFAIRS OF GERMANY; RUPTURE OF THE PEACE OF AMIENS; ARREST AND EXECUTION OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN; ALEXANDER REMONSTRATES WITH NAPOLEON CONCERNING IT; NAPOLEON ASSUMES THE TITLE OF EMPEROR; THIRD COALITION AGAINST FRANCE; THE BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ, AND DEFEAT OF THE EMPERORS FRANCIS AND ALEXANDER.

THE concurrence of the guards had been secured by Pahlen and Benningsen; and on the morning following the murder of Paul—who, it was reported, had died during the night in a fit of apoplexy—Alexander Paulovitch (*i.e.*, son of Paul) was proclaimed emperor. The chief offices of state necessarily fell to the lot of the principal conspirators, and the new monarch was compelled to take counsel with those whose hands had recently been stained with his father's blood. To such an extent was this the case, that a lady of rank and wit wrote to Fouché, on the occasion of a public ceremony at which Alexander was present, soon after his accession—"The young emperor walked, preceded by the assassins of his grandfather, followed by those of his father, and surrounded by his own."

Notwithstanding this ominous epigram, indicative of a dangerous state of things in Russia, Alexander was hailed with joy by the people. He was young, being only in his twenty-fourth year, and possessed of a majestic figure, and a cast of countenance regarded as benevolent. He had been educated by the celebrated Colonel La

Harpe,\* who is said—though we doubt the assertion—to have imbued his mind with liberal principles; indeed, La Harpe's own principles were unsettled, and his liberalism eventually doubtful. Alexander had been married, at the early age of sixteen, to the Princess Louisa Maria Augusta of Baden; on which occasion that princess adopted the Greek form of Christianity, and took the name of Elizabeth Alexiewna.

The first acts of the reign of the new emperor were both pacific and popular. He issued a ukase, in which, after expressing his intention of governing the empire according to the maxims and plans of his august grandmother, Catherine II., he restored to the nobility all the privileges they had enjoyed in that reign; re-established the rights of municipalities; abolished secret proceedings in criminal cases; granted a general amnesty, and terminated all state prosecutions then in progress. At the same time certain benefits were conferred upon the clergy, by which their personal dignity was enhanced; and many indications were given that the recent reign of terror was to be succeeded by a mild and conciliatory sway.

\* Alexander's manners were highly polished, and expressed great amiability. In a biography of him by H. E. Lloyd, many anecdotes are related illustrative of this quality. Amongst them are the following respecting his conduct to his instructor:—"His attachment to La Harpe was rather filial than that of a pupil; his greatest delight was in his society, and he would cling round his neck in the most affectionate embraces, by which frequently his clothes were covered with powder. 'See, my dear prince,' La Harpe would say, 'what a figure you have made yourself!' 'Oh! never mind it,' Alexander replied; 'no one will blame me for carrying away all I can from my dear preceptor.' One day he went to visit La Harpe, as was his custom, alone; the porter was a new servant, and did not know him; he asked his name, and was answered, Alexander. The porter then led him into the servant's hall, told him his master was at his studies, and could not be disturbed for an hour. The servant's homely meal was prepared, and the prince was

invited to partake of it, which he did without affectation. When the hour was expired, the porter informed La Harpe that a young man of the name of Alexander had been waiting some time, and wanted to see him. 'Show him in.' But what was La Harpe's surprise to see his pupil! He wished to apologise; but Alexander, placing his finger on his lips, said, 'My dear tutor, do not mention it; an hour to you is worth a day to me; and, besides, I have had a hearty breakfast with your servant, which I should have lost had I been admitted when I came.' The poor porter's feelings may be better imagined than described; but Alexander, laughing, said, 'I like you the better for it; you are an honest servant, and there are a hundred roubles to convince you that I think so.'" The same author observes—"La Harpe was, in some respects, the same to Alexander that Le Fort had been to Peter the Great, a hundred years before. He brought him up, without political or religious prejudices in the wiser principles of an enlightened age."



Paul had left Russia on the verge of active hostilities with England. Sir Hyde Parker, after the destruction of the Danish fleet at Copenhagen, had gone in pursuit of a portion of the Russian fleet, which fled from the encounter, and was fortunate enough to shelter itself beneath the batteries of Cronstadt. Alexander wrote to that admiral, informing him that he had set the crews of the British ships at liberty; that he was willing to close with the amicable propositions made by the government of this country to his predecessor; and adding, that he should hold the admiral responsible for any act of hostility that might take place after this notice. At the same time, Alexander wrote, with his own hand, a letter to George III., expressing his anxiety to arrange the existing differences in a friendly manner. Besides liberating the English mariners who had been imprisoned by Paul, and conveying them to the ports from whence they had been taken, the new czar revoked the prohibition that had been laid upon the exportation of corn. This latter measure gave great satisfaction both in England and Russia. In this country it relieved the distress of the people during a period of severe scarcity; and in Russia it exchanged the accumulated stores of grain, that was in danger of rotting in warehouses, into the manufactures and gold of England.

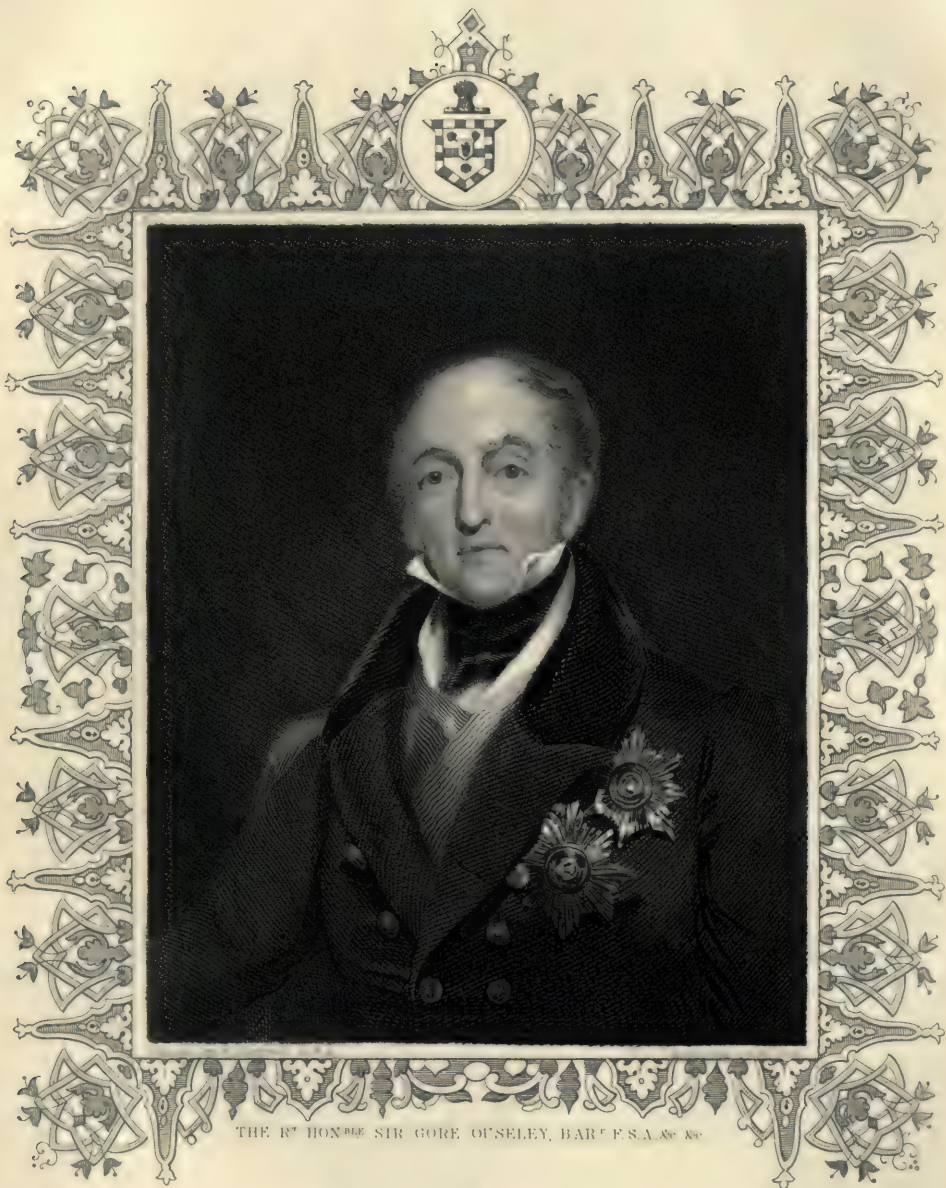
This pacific spirit was readily met by the English government. Lord St. Helens was sent to St. Petersburg, where a treaty was speedily concluded between the two powers, which admitted and defined the right of search claimed by this country, and, consequently, abandoned the principles of the armed neutrality. By this treaty, it was provided, "That the right of searching merchant ships belonging to the subjects of one of the contracting powers, and navigating under a ship of war of the same power, shall only be exercised by ships of war of the belligerent party, and shall never extend to the fitters-out of privateers, or other vessels which do not belong to the imperial or royal fleet of their majesties, but which their subjects shall have fitted out for war; that the effects on board neutral ships shall be free, with the exception of contraband of war and of enemy's property; and it is agreed not to comprise in the number of the latter the merchandise of the produce, growth, or manufacture of the countries at war, which should have been acquired by the subjects of the neutral power,

and should be transported for their account." Contraband articles, between the two powers, were defined as "cannons, mortars, fire-arms, pistols, bombs, grenades, balls, bullets, firelocks, flints, matches, sulphur, helmets, pikes, swords, sword-belts, pouches, saddles and bridles; excepting such quantity of the said articles as may be necessary for the defence of the ship and crew." By this treaty, the right of search, though admitted in principle, was placed upon a more equitable footing, and divested of its most galling features.

This treaty created great irritation in the mind of Napoleon, whom Alexander in vain endeavoured to pacify in a letter couched in the most pacific terms. The First Consul observed—"Europe beheld with astonishment this ignominious treaty signed by Russia, and which, by consequence, Denmark and Sweden were compelled to adopt. It was equivalent to an admission of the sovereignty of the seas in the British parliament, and the slavery of all other states. This treaty was such, that England could have desired nothing more; and a power of the third order would have been ashamed to have signed it." Napoleon sent general Doroc to St. Petersburg, to counterbalance English influence at that court; but, though that officer was received with marked distinction, he was unable to accomplish the object of his journey. Yet Alexander secretly assured him that he entertained a feeling of admiration for the first consul, and an anxiety to maintain friendly relations with France.

Sweden and Denmark, though not included in the convention between this country and Russia, were obliged to follow the example of that state. The embargo which had been laid on English ships and property, was raised on the 19th of May, in Russia, Sweden, and Denmark; and corresponding steps were taken on the part of the English government. Prussia, which had been unwillingly drawn into the quarrel, also took the first opportunity of escaping from its effects. "Thus," observes Alison, "was dissolved, in less than six months after it had been formed, the most formidable confederacy ever arrayed against the English maritime power. Professedly contracted in order so secure the liberty of the seas, it was really directed against the grandeur and prosperity of Great Britain; breathing only the sentiments of freedom and justice, it was, in truth, intended to





*Gore Ouseley*

*The negotiator of a treaty between the Shah of Persia and  
the Emperor Alexander during the French Invasion of Russia.*

Engraved by J. Smith, del. & J. G. Heath, sculp. London: Printed by J. G. Heath, 1813.







divide, among the coalesced states, the power and the ascendancy of a more fortunate rival. The rapidity with which this powerful alliance was broken up by England, towards the conclusion of a long and burdensome war, and when her people were labouring under the combined pressure of severe want and diminished employment, is one of the most remarkable features of this memorable contest; and, perhaps more than any other, characteristic of the vast ascendancy, moral as well as political, which she has acquired among the other nations of the world."

The convention between England and Russia, signed at St. Petersburg on the 17th of June, 1801, was followed, on the 1st of October, by the signature of preliminaries of peace between France and England, or, in other words, by the temporary pacification of Europe. The peace itself was concluded at Amiens on the 27th of March in the following year. Temporary as the peace was, it was yet a necessity. The two great belligerent powers had scarcely the means of carrying on an active warfare against each other. Without allies or auxiliaries on the continent, England could not hope to touch France by land; while, on the other hand, with fleets ruined or blockaded, and a navy completely disheartened, France could not expect to touch England by sea. Both nations, also, were comparatively exhausted, and needed rest; the war, like a vast fire, had, at least for a time, burnt itself out for mere want of something to consume. The French nation obtained the gratification of having the republic recognised by England: this country had fought obstinately, and in some respects brilliantly, with steel and gold, in a quarrel where it should have stood aloof as arbiter, instead of rashly mixing itself up as a principal; and by so doing, it had drained the best blood of England, and swelled the national debt from about £244,000,000 to above £520,000,000. Sheridan quaintly characterised the peace by saying, "it was such as all men were glad of, but of which no man could be proud." Napoleon privately observed—"It was but a truce; his government stood in need of fresh victories to consolidate itself; it must either be the first government in Europe, or it must fall."

As soon as Alexander had established his foreign relations upon a pacific basis, he directed his attention towards those internal reforms which Russia required. He at

first showed a submission to Count Pahlen and to some other of the conspirators; but he soon found means to get rid of men whose presence must ever have reminded him of the frightful catastrophe which led him to the throne. The empress-mother, who assumed a dramatic grief at the death of the husband whom she had long known only to dread, caused a picture to be painted, representing Paul at the feet of the Virgin, imploring the vengeance of Heaven upon his assassins. Count Pahlen, alarmed at the crowds attracted by this startling exhibition, caused it to be removed. The princess, irritated against the minister, said to Alexander, "My son, you must choose between Pahlen and me." The emperor, not sorry to be furnished with an excuse for the dismissal of a person whose presence was painful to him, caused it to be intimated to Pahlen, that he must privately retire from St. Petersburg. The ambitious statesman felt that he had failed in his design to rule through the instrumentality of a youthful sovereign—that he had lost his hold on the mind of the emperor; and he therefore sought his safety by resigning all his offices and proceeding to Riga. The empress-mother herself had the ambition to lay claim, after the murder of her husband, to the vacant throne. Some altercation took place between her and her son on this subject; but she was soon prevailed upon to relinquish her pretensions. This collision did not appear to leave any unpleasant traces on the mind either of Alexander or his mother, to whom, during his life, he always continued to show respect and attachment.

Pahlen banished, Alexander shared the reins of government with some of the companions of his early days. These were Messrs. de Strogonoff, Nowosiltzoff, and the Polish prince, Czartoryski, and a more mature friend, M. de Kotschubey. The imperial clique entertained notions which, with something of truth and liberality, were characterised by more of extravagance. Paul I., and even the illustrious Catherine, they considered as barbarous and unenlightened sovereigns. The partition of Poland they regarded as an outrage; the war against the French revolution as the result of blind prejudices. Russia was, for the future, to undertake a totally different mission; she was to protect the weak—to curb the strong—to oblige France and England to confine themselves within the limits



of justice—to force both of them to respect, in their struggle, the interests of nations. “Happy pretensions,” remarks the French historian Thiers, “noble ideas, *if they had been serious*; if they had not resembled those liberal impulses of the French *noblesse*, brought up in the school of Voltaire and Rousseau, talking of humanity and liberty, till the day when the French revolution came to require them to conform their acts with their theories. Then those titled philosophers became the emigrants of Coblenz.”

Alexander, influenced by the doubtful liberalism which he was soon to discard, and, under the influence of his young advisers, having restored to the nobility the prerogatives which had been wrested from them by Paul, then extended the right of possessing landed property to all the subjects of the empire. The measure appeared to indicate a desire to abolish the vassalage of the peasants; but in that direction the emperor never proceeded any farther, but appeared rather to recede from such principles year after year, than to make any advances towards carrying them into effect. The natural warmth of youth, and perhaps the influence of his early training by La Harpe, induced him to regard all questions affecting popular rights with more liberality, at this period, than he ever afterwards displayed. By nature, Alexander was a mild yet artful despot; and it was but for a brief space that education, and other influences, placed him in the light of an admirer of progressive and liberal principles. He had no real confidence in a career founded on such tenets, and soon learned to fear their results. It would, indeed, be difficult for an irresponsible autocrat to become a reformer in the interests of the people. The emperor soon acquired the notion that the Russians were not prepared for liberty, and he based this assumption upon the facts of their frequent revolutions against despotism, and the vices which slavery had engendered amongst them. He did not reflect that slaves are never prepared for liberty; that it is necessary to take off their chains before they can be made to understand and appreciate those rights which belong to the condition of freemen. He found the people serfs, and such he left them.

Alexander also set an example of judicious economy in his own household; he abolished some useless offices, and en-

couraged the establishment of canals, roads, and bridges. This was to improve the country; but we do not find that he did much towards improving the people. We do not lay any great weight on the fact of his abandoning the idea of the emancipation of the serfs, because the system, with all its evils, has some counteracting benefits; and even many Englishmen have contended, that the lot of the Russian serf is happier than that of the British peasant. The first, when past labour, is maintained by those of his own class, and passes the evening of his life in as much comfort as he has known during any other period of it: if the last outlives his ability to earn his bread, he has no alternative but the union workhouse; and a life hitherto passed in independence, is closed in the serfdom of pauperism. In these remarks we pass no censure upon the English system; it is the result of a stern necessity. The circumstances are widely different in the British and Russian empires. In this country, the limited extent of its territory, and the wealth of a considerable portion of its inhabitants, make the price of land exorbitantly high: in Russia, these circumstances are reversed, and land is readily parted with for an almost nominal consideration. To such an extent is this the case, that if the serfs of the Northern empire possessed the personal independence of British agricultural labourers, and had their property as effectually secured to them, all the sober and industrious among them would become small landed proprietors in their old age. Surrounded by their circumstances, the English labourers of one generation would, in the next, become farmers, cultivating their own land. But the serf has but little interest in his labour, the result of a considerable portion of which goes to enrich his lord. Nor has he any strong inducement to accumulate property; for he is always liable to be despoiled of it. It will be seen, therefore, that it is manifestly incorrect to conclude that serfdom is scarcely an evil because the Russian serf is, under certain circumstances, better off than the British peasant. To establish this argument, it should be shown, that the slave-peasant of Russia is as well off in his age as the free peasant of Britain would be under the same circumstances. In each case the conditions must be equal, or the analogy is deficient, and the result attempted to be drawn from it inaccurate.



Some writers infer, that the emperor Alexander grew wiser as he grew older, and that the abandonment of a subject involving the dearest interests of the millions of his empire, was the natural result of this increased worldly wisdom. We cannot recognise any connection whatever between this assumed cause and the result, and discard it as altogether illogical. It would be more correct to say, that Alexander grew in selfishness and a distaste for experimental and difficult reforms as he advanced in life, rather than that he grew wiser. We question if selfishness is wisdom, even in the lowest conceivable worldly sense; it looks too much to immediate results, and is seldom capable of taking a comprehensive view of any subject. Alexander, doubtless, soon saw, that to give liberty to the serfs, would be to create a great number of small owners of land, who would become sturdy and independent as they attained a knowledge of their own strength and importance in the state. It would be, in fact, to create a PEOPLE; and an independent people might dethrone a despot who seriously abused his power. Alexander does not appear to have recognised the fact, that a throne based upon the affections of a well-treated and independent people, would be far more secure and durable than one erected upon the bayonets of a fickle army, and the servile tenets of a superstitious, ignorant, and materialistic priesthood. Revolutions in Russia are conducted by the nobles, or those about the person of the sovereign; and the people have usually regarded the murder of a czar with indifference. To them it merely brought a change of masters, the difference in whose rule did not extend so low in the empire as to affect their interests. But a free people become attached to the sovereign under whom they enjoy their freedom, and this attachment is his safeguard against a discontented and turbulent nobility. Peter the Great found it so; and when his subjects had learned rightly to understand him, he was, in effect, the most absolute monarch that ever swayed the sceptre of the North. But the selfishness which Alexander acquired, or rather gave a freer rein to, as he grew easy in his imperial robes, prevented him from seeing, or at least trusting to, those distant results to which we have alluded, arising from the emancipation of the millions whom he ruled. To him the commonalty of Russia were—to

use the language of a benevolent and accomplished English judge, who graced the judicial seat with the elegancies of poetry—

“The common herd,  
The vassals of our ancient house, the mass  
Of bones and muscles framed to till the soil  
A few brief years, then rot unnamed beneath it;  
Or, deck'd for slaughter, at their master's call  
To smite and to be smitten, and lie crush'd  
In heaps to swell his glory or his shame.”\*

Such Alexander found the serfs of Russia, and such his prudent wisdom left them. That it would have been dangerous in a young monarch to have at once emancipated them, we readily conceive; but the danger would chiefly have arisen from the irritation of his nobility, who would thus have been deprived of a source of revenue which they acquired by accident, and ought never to have possessed.†

Yet Alexander might have attempted, and we believe accomplished, this emancipation in the height of his power, when his nobles dared not have made head against him. It might have been preceded by many preparatory measures, and effected so gradually, that the presumed loss to his nobility would have been but lightly felt. That they would eventually have experienced any loss at all, we are by no means convinced; for their uncultivated estates would soon have acquired a marketable value, and found purchasers or tenants in a newly-created class of society. Russia, at the same time, would be placed in a position from which she would make rapid advances in wealth, power, and population; and, in fact, become in reality the greatest of European powers. But Alexander was too prudent to attempt a change which would have made his memory cherished by his people, admired by Europe, and honoured by the world. As he grew more secure in power, he became more and more indifferent to the giant social problem of the empire; and the dread of serf outbreak, and a sanguinary serf retaliation on their oppressors, haunts, to this hour, the higher circles of Russia, and creates apprehensions which, though seldom spoken of, are deeply felt. If those brutalised and contemned millions should ever rise in wrath, and with mad impatience proceed to retaliate for

\* Talfourd's *Ion*.

† See *ante*, p. 85, how serfdom accidentally arose from an edict of Boris Godunof, forbidding the peasantry to remove from the estates on which they were born.



ages of oppression, awful indeed would be the result. The revolting scenes which must inevitably take place in such a *Jacquerie*, we trust it may never be the lot of any future historian to describe.

Let us return from this brief digression. The sickly nature of Alexander's liberalism was evidenced by his conduct with respect to the press. This had been, in effect, annihilated by the unequivocal tyranny of his father. The new emperor, though seeking for confidence and popularity, only modified the rigour of that censorship which had paralysed the press, and arrested the young but expanding literature of the empire. A freer importation of books, also, was allowed; but this concession was so vigilantly watched by the Russian police, that it scarcely produced any perceptible influence.

In the early part of his reign, Alexander proved himself an energetic ruler; and he laboured with almost as much diligence in public affairs as his illustrious grandmother, Catherine, had done. Among the benefits which, soon after his accession, he conferred upon the empire, were a reduction of the taxes, and a remission of the odious conscription for the army, which was as hateful to the peasant as it was injurious to the interests of his owner. Schools were instituted for general education; but they were subjected to the rigorous control of the government; and we may not unfairly assume that little more was taught than a slight knowledge of the religious tenets considered vital by the Greek church, and the doctrine of the duty of passive obedience to the emperor and all constituted authorities. Yet much importance was attached to education of the kind the emperor thought fit to permit; and a new branch of administration—that of public instruction—was created.

Perhaps the most important of the reforms which distinguished the first year of the reign of Alexander, was the abolition of the secret department, which, under another name, carried on the despotic and mysterious measures which, in former times, had been performed by the dreaded chancery of the secret Inquisition. This court—irresponsible for the conduct of its proceedings, the motives of its members, or the iniquity of its decisions—had inflicted an incalculable amount of misery upon the country. Any person who provoked the vengeance of a superior, was in danger of being cited before this terrible tribunal, which not un-

frequently condemned him to perpetual imprisonment, or even caused him to be secretly executed. No less than twenty-six persons of rank, at St. Petersburg, had disappeared in this manner within a few months of the death of Paul; and it is probable that the horror and indignation excited by these events, aided considerably in bringing about the murder of the despot. Other improvements were effected by the emperor Alexander in the administration of public affairs: a permanent council was established to examine, previously to publication, all ordinances that were to be issued on the affairs of the empire; and every minister was held responsible for the proceedings of his department, and compelled to render an annual account of them to the senate.

Before the close of 1801, Alexander showed that he was as eager as his predecessors had been to extend the dominions of the empire in the direction of the East. In the autumn of that year the emperor issued a manifesto proclaiming the annexation of Georgia to the Russian empire; that country having previously been under the nominal protection of Persia and Turkey. With habitual insincerity, he assigned humanity, and not ambition, as his motive. The people of Georgia, though personally brave, had suffered severely from the attacks of the *Lesghians* and the *Tartars*; to which was added the calamity of dissensions amongst themselves. During the reign of Paul, Georgia had been occupied by Russian troops sent there ostensibly for the purpose of assisting the inhabitants against their enemies. The aid they rendered was not sufficient to expel the latter, but yet enough to show that the country would be safe if under the dominion of the Russian sceptre. When Alexander came to the throne, he turned his attention to the affairs of Georgia, with the avowed object of ascertaining if she could subsist, with her former government, under the protection of Russia. His preformed conclusion was soon expressed in a declaration, that the best way to terminate the troubles of Georgia would be, to unite it at once to the Russian dominions. An imperial ukase was accordingly issued to that effect, and the Russian eagle was planted on a portion of the romantic soil of the Caucasus.

Alexander also, during this period, showed a disposition to extend the influence of Russia in another direction, by entering into a



negotiation with France respecting the compensation, for the entire or partial loss of their dominions, to be granted to certain of the minor powers of Germany, with which country he was connected, both through his mother and through his father, who was born head of the house of Holstein-Gottorp. It was in the course of these negotiations that he had his first interview with the prevaricating Frederic William III., king of Prussia—an interview which is understood to have laid the foundation of an intimate friendship between the two sovereigns, and to have established a concurrence of views which powerfully influenced the future policy of each. Alexander, though secretly dissatisfied with the unimportant part which Napoleon allowed him to play in these transactions, yet contented himself with a show of outward respect, and a precedent which went far to establish the right of Russia to interfere in the affairs of Germany.

The tranquillity which Russia now enjoyed, gave Alexander full scope for the improvement of the empire, and the extension of its commerce and manufactures. He encouraged the English system of agriculture, and allotted a tract of land to be cultivated in that manner. The brief repose of Europe from the fierce wars which had so devastated a great portion of it, gave an impetus to commerce; and the ports both of the Baltic and the Euxine were visited by immense numbers of ships, and exhibited a great degree of prosperity. The trade with China also shared the general improvement; and a herring-fishery was established on the White Sea, under the immediate protection of the emperor. A voyage round the world was also projected, with the object of endeavouring to establish the commerce of the Russian American Company with Eastern Asia, and also for the purpose of opening a more extensive intercourse with Japan and China. Several German professors accompanied the expedition, with the view of making discoveries in geography and natural history. It also carried an ambassador accredited to Japan; but the government of that nation refused to receive him.

Even at this early period of his reign, Alexander showed that he was bent on rigidly maintaining everything that the Russian government regarded as its right.

\* By the peace of Amiens, England had undertaken to restore Malta to the knights of St. John; that it should be a free port, garrisoned by the

Sweden had, in a most trifling matter, infringed the frontier of Finland; and a dispute accordingly arose between the courts of Stockholm and St. Petersburg, which would have led to a war, had not hostilities been averted by the concession of the Swedish monarch. The military preparations of Russia were very extensive, and the emperor took advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him by reorganising the fleet and the army, and strengthening his means of defence or aggression. Alexander, however, had another motive in thus augmenting the military force of the empire. He had become jealous of the colossal and devouring power of Napoleon, who had not acted with good faith towards him in the settlement of the affairs of the minor princes of Germany.

Alexander was doubtless encouraged in the hostile feelings towards France, which the conduct of the first consul had excited in him, by the rupture of the brief peace between that country and England. The annexation, in 1802, of Piedmont to the French republic, irritated both England and Russia, as Alexander had personally interested himself for the king of Sardinia. On the other hand, Napoleon took offence at the refusal of England to deliver up Malta, on the plea that a Neapolitan garrison would have been but a poor security against a hostile visitation of the French.\* Lord Whitworth, the English ambassador, had a long and stormy conference on this subject with Napoleon at the Tuileries. The English minister having represented to him that the state of things which the treaty of Amiens had contemplated was completely altered by his enormous accession of power in Italy, he peremptorily rejected the claim of England to interfere in his arrangements concerning other states, and insisted on Malta being delivered up to some neutral power. Turning to Count Markoff, the Russian ambassador, and to the Chevalier Azara, who were standing at a little distance, Napoleon said to them—"The English wish for war; but if they be the first to draw the sword, I shall be the last to sheathe it. They have no regard for treaties. We must henceforth cover them with shame." Shortly afterwards he resumed his conversation with Lord Whitworth, by observing—"For what reason are troops of a neutral power, and that neither this country nor France should have any representative in the order.



those armaments? against whom are these measures of precaution? I have not a single ship of the line in the ports of France; but if you will arm, I shall arm likewise; if you go to war, I shall go to war also. You may, perhaps, be able to destroy France, but never to intimidate her." "We do not desire," responded Lord Whitworth, "either the one or the other; we wish to live in a good understanding with her." "It is necessary, then," continued Napoleon with much excitement, "to pay regard to treaties; those who pay no regard to treaties will be responsible for it to all Europe." The hostile feelings of the two governments did not admit of longer repression; and England again declared war against France, on the 18th of May, 1803.

Though irritated against France, Alexander, who, at the commencement of his reign, had assumed to himself the character of pacificator amongst the European powers, did not as yet feel called upon to enter into hostilities against the republic. He desired rather to terminate the quarrel which had so long distracted Europe; and the Russian chancellor observed, "that if the war were to be prolonged between France and England, Russia would be compelled finally to take part in it." A hollow peace yet prevailed; but trifling and undignified disputes took place between Napoleon and the Russian ambassador Markoff, who actually assumed the extraordinary position of a foreign minister intriguing at Paris in favour of the Bourbons. This induced Napoleon openly to insult him, to order the arrest of his secretary, and, in a fit of temper, to defy the Russian government. Alexander, feeling that his ambassador had acted in a manner inconsistent with his station, gratified the first consul by recalling him; but at the same time conferred upon him a special decoration as a mark of his continued favour.

Such was the state of affairs when, in 1804, Napoleon, irritated by conspiracies to assassinate him, ordered the illegal arrest and judicial murder of the young Bourbon prince, the Duke d'Enghien. On the renewal of the war, the English government took the French emigrants again into its pay, and they were directed to go to the German side of the Rhine, to act when required. The duke, unfortunately for himself, was regarded as their head. Meantime, the conspiracy of Georges and Pichegru was discovered at Paris. It has never

been proved that the duke was privy to that conspiracy; but it appears that he was led to expect an insurrectionary movement in France in favour of the Bourbons, of which he intended to avail himself, by entering that country at the head of the emigrants. Napoleon, alarmed at the conspiracy, and at the avowed intention of Georges to assassinate him, seems to have persuaded himself that the duke was connected with the Paris conspirators, and that the whole was a plan directed by the Bourbons in England, and by the English government; and he determined upon getting rid of his enemies by summary means. He accordingly dispatched a party of *gendarmes*, who crossed the Rhine, entered without ceremony the neutral territory of Baden, surrounded the *château* of Ettenheim, and, on the 15th of March, seized the person of the duke. The arrest was immediately followed by a trial before a secret court, and the duke was found guilty of all the charges preferred against him, though the worst of them was never proved. They were, that he had borne arms against the French republic; that he had offered his services to the English government; that he was at the head of a party of emigrants assembled near the frontiers of France, and had treasonable correspondence with the neighbouring departments; and, lastly, that he was an accomplice in the conspiracy formed at Paris against the life of the first consul. The last accusation he indignantly denied, but admitted the others. Sentence of death was pronounced, and carried into execution with a rapidity which was regarded as both harsh and indecent. The trial took place on the 20th; and that very night, or rather before daybreak the following morning, he was roused from sleep, led into the ditch of the castle of Vincennes, where he was confined, and shot by torch-light. The body was instantly buried, without any funeral ceremony, in a grave which had just previously been dug on the spot. A great sensation was produced by this act, and much indignation expressed; but we think the apology which Napoleon afterwards made at St. Helena concerning it, not without weight. It was, that he believed that the duke was implicated in the conspiracy against his life, and that he was obliged to strike terror among the royalists, and put an end to their plots, by showing that he was not a man to be trifled with. Still it must be admitted, that the



arrest was in violation of the law of nations, and that the trial was an informal one.

The fate of the Duke d'Enghien excited interest and commiseration throughout Europe. He was young, and reputed to be brave, amiable, and one of the most promising of the Bourbon princes. The sovereigns of Europe were especially touched and offended; but the emperor Alexander made the greatest exhibition of his feeling. The sufferer was of royal blood, and Alexander felt indignant that one of such rank should have been shot like a common offender; his emotion was elicited less for the man than for the distinguished position he occupied. The autocrat at once addressed a remonstrance to the French minister, representing the alarm that conduct so unjustifiable was calculated to spread throughout Europe, and concluding with a hope that the first consul would see the necessity of putting an end to such a state of things. Not satisfied with an interference which Napoleon must have regarded as dictatorial, if not uncalled for, Alexander also addressed a note to the diet at Ratisbon, calling upon the princes of the empire to demand satisfaction for the violation of the neutrality of Germany. He also went into mourning for the unfortunate Bourbon, and commanded the court at St. Petersburg, and all his ministers at foreign courts, to do the same. Napoleon was necessarily irritated at these proceedings, and a sharp correspondence took place between the French and Russian ministers. As might have been expected, the first consul repudiated altogether the right of Alexander to interfere in the concerns of France; and, after alluding to the influence which its enemies were allowed to exercise at St. Petersburg, sarcastically desired the emperor to act openly, if it was his intention to form a new coalition. Recriminations followed, and it became highly probable that hostilities might ensue between the two nations; for affairs were in that condition, that any further disagreement would almost inevitably lead to an open rupture.

Further offence soon followed. On the 18th of May, 1804, Napoleon assumed the title of emperor, and was solemnly crowned as such in the ancient cathedral of Notre-Dame, by Pope Pius VII., on the 2nd of December following. Prior to the ceremony, Alexander made a strong remonstrance against the assumption of the imperial sceptre on the part of the great soldier,

and afterwards refused to acknowledge the new sovereign. The ambassadors of the two monarchs were respectively recalled. The despotic king of Sweden followed Alexander in his refusal to acknowledge the imperial title assumed by Napoleon. Prussia coldly acquiesced, and Austria assented to the startling proceeding of the new military emperor. Alexander therefore felt himself placed in a position which demanded circumspection, unless he felt inclined to enter on a war with France without any ally but England. This difficulty was increased by the aggressive attitude which Alexander had assumed towards Turkey; an attitude justifying the insinuation of France, that the northern autocrat had adopted one course of policy in Europe, and another in Asia. It is certain that his movements in the latter direction were inconsistent with his professions in the former; that while he was endeavouring to restore the old divisions of the European kingdoms, he was laying snares for the extension of his territory in the east, and the subversion of the states of Turkey and Persia.

Though Alexander acted with caution, he prepared to take advantage of any favourable opportunity that might offer for acting against France, and curbing the ambition of its newly-made emperor. Great activity prevailed in all the arsenals of Russia; recruits for the navy were raised throughout the provinces; the since famous Sebastopol, on the Black Sea, was declared the first naval seaport, and merchant vessels were excluded from the harbour. The military force, also, was augmented to half a million of men, and large bodies of troops were assembled on the western frontiers. At the same time, an attempt was made to remove the distaste of the Russians for a new war, by declarations that the commerce of the empire was in a highly prosperous condition, and by the reduction of duties in all the ports of the Euxine. Yet, as if fearing any expression of popular opinion, the censorship of the press was rendered still more rigorous—a measure which some hollow common-places about liberty and the “advancement of real knowledge,” failed to render the less odious.

The emperor Napoleon, finding that his assumption of imperial state was received by the other powers of Europe with less opposition than he had anticipated, converted the Italian republics into a kingdom, and on the 26th of May, 1805, caused himself to



be crowned with extraordinary pomp, in the cathedral of Milan, as king of Italy. Napoleon seized the iron crown of the old Lombard kings, and, placing it on his brow, exclaimed, "God has given it to me; woe to him who shall attempt to lay hands on it." He appointed his step-son, Eugene Beauharnais, to be his viceroy of the kingdom of Italy, and on the 7th of June opened in person the session of the Italian legislative body. The republic of Genoa was, in the same month, united to the French empire, at the request of its doge and people. The Italian republic of Lucca also was transformed into a principality, and given to one of Napoleon's family, to be held as a fief of the newly-created empire, to the government of which the whole of Savoy, Piedmont, and Genoa was now subjected. With one exception—that of San Marino—the Italian republics were extinguished.

Austria remonstrated in vain against the never-ending encroachments of Napoleon in Italy; and the views of that power underwent a change in consequence of his usurpations in that direction. The representations of Russia alike remained unheeded. A treaty had already been entered into between Russia and England, which, after stating that the situation of Europe demanded a speedy remedy, bound the contracting parties to consult respecting the means of redress, without waiting for further encroachments on the part of the French government. This led to a conclusion that the most effectual course would be to form a league of the states of Europe, and to collect a force which, independently of the succours furnished by England, should amount to 500,000 men, in order either to persuade or compel, according to circumstances, the French government to the re-establishment of peace, and the restoration of the balance of power. The objects to be attained were—1. The revival of the independence of Switzerland and Holland. 2. The compulsion of the French government to withdraw its troops from the north of Germany. 3. The obtaining the restoration of Piedmont to the king of Sardinia. 4. To obtain the future security of Naples, and compel Napoleon to evacuate Italy. England agreed to contribute forces by sea and land, and also such subsidies as might be deemed requisite. It was further agreed that, in the event of the formation of the league, peace should not be made with France without the consent

of all the powers who should become parties to it. Yet actual hostilities were not to be entered upon until the attempt to obtain the objects of the proposed alliance by negotiation should have proved a failure.

The engulfment of Italy by the ambition of Napoleon, induced Austria to become a member of the proposed league; and, in the summer of 1805, a new coalition against France was formed between England, Russia, Austria, and Sweden. Prussia was urged to join it; but the wily Frederic William hesitated, increased his armies, and remained neutral. His aid seemed to promise victory to the side to which he should attach himself, and a large party in Prussia were anxious to draw the sword against Napoleon. But Frederic William still professed a friendship for the warlike emperor, and he assembled a strong army on the frontiers of Austria, to which the French troops had been advanced by rapid marches; but whom that army was to oppose was a secret. When Alexander demanded a free passage through Silesia for a Russian army, he met with a refusal. On repeating his demand in an imperious tone, the king of Prussia answered, that his generals had received orders to treat any Russian who set his foot on the Prussian soil as an enemy. There was little doubt that Frederic William would either remain neutral, or wait till one of the belligerent parties should have been weakened by defeats, and then join the victor, and take his share in the spoliation either of Austria or France.

Napoleon afforded the powers arrayed against him little opportunity for aggressive movements, and but scanty time for further preparations. He resolved at once to concentrate his whole military force, for the purpose of destroying the combination against him before the Russian troops had passed their own frontier. Austria was the first in the field, and she marched an army, confided to the command of the incapable General Mack, into the electorate of Bavaria. Napoleon led the army which he had formed at Boulogne for the invasion of England, towards the Rhine; and other troops from Holland, Hanover, and the interior of France were marched to the same quarter. Regardless of the neutrality of Prussia, he not only marched his troops through Anspach and Bareuth, but even occupied those districts—a bold step, which gave him incalculable advantages over the enemy in point of time, as the Russians were obliged to reach the



theatre of the contest by circuitous routes. Napoleon then opened one of those dazzling campaigns which, for the rapidity of the movements and the great talent displayed in them, have never been surpassed in the annals of history. During the month of October he almost annihilated the Austrian army by a succession of victories. Several divisions laid down their arms to the French. General Mack threw himself into Ulm, where he allowed himself to be surrounded; and then surrendered, on the 17th of October, without fighting, with more than 20,000 men, and all his staff, artillery, and stores. Napoleon dismissed no less than eighteen Austrian generals on their parole, and sent a waggon loaded with imperial standards to Paris. The other Austrian divisions scattered about were unable to make any effectual resistance; and the victorious French army marched on Vienna, and entered that capital in triumph!

Alexander was startled, and hurried to Berlin to exert his personal influence on the Prussian monarch, and induce him to join the coalition against Napoleon. The war party in Prussia was roused into great activity by the recent violation of the Prussian territory by the French army, and Frederic William, sharing in that feeling, or carried away by the tide of circumstances, not only consented to an interview with Alexander, but concluded a secret convention with him, by which he bound himself to join the coalition, unless Napoleon withdrew from Germany before the 15th of December. The Russian emperor attracted much popularity at Berlin by the gracefulness and suavity of his manner, and he paid so much attention to all the relations of the great Frederic, that a sort of fascination existed in his favour. A curious scene also took place at Potsdam during Alexander's visit. In company with the king and queen, he visited at midnight, by torchlight, the vault in which lay the coffin of Frederic the Great. They knelt before it, and kissed the coffin. Alexander then grasped the hand of his brother sovereign, and solemnly pledged himself that nothing should ever break their friendship. He then hastened, by way of Leipzig and Weimar, to Dresden, from whence he proceeded to Olmutz; and there, on the 18th of November, joined the emperor Francis of Austria. A Russian army that had previously arrived to assist the Austrians, had suffered a disastrous defeat; a second one arrived on the same day as the

emperor did, and the allied army amounted to about 80,000 men. That of the French is usually estimated at about 75,000; but it was composed of troops flushed with victory, and immeasurably superior to their antagonists in skill, ardour, and discipline.

Napoleon, on hearing that the emperor Alexander had joined the army, sent General Savary (afterwards Duke of Rivigo) to him with a complimentary letter, in which he expressed an earnest desire to cultivate the friendship of the czar. The real object, however, of Savary was to make himself acquainted, during the three days which his visit lasted, with the leading characters of the emperor's camp, and the opinions that prevailed amongst them. Alexander received this messenger with great courtesy. The interview which took place between them is thus described by Savary himself:—"When I arrived at the Russian headquarters, I found the officers and staff declaiming against the ambition of the French government, and full of confidence in the success of their arms. The emperor received me in the most gracious manner, and made a sign for his attendants to retire. I could not avoid a feeling of timidity and awe when I found myself alone with that monarch. Nature had done much for him; it would be difficult to find a model so perfect and gracious; he was then twenty-six years of age. He spoke French in its native purity, without the slightest tinge of foreign accent, and made use on all occasions of our most classical expressions. As there was not the least affectation in his manner, it was easy to see that this was the result of a finished education. The emperor said, when I put the letter into his hand, 'I am grateful for this step on your master's side; it is with regret that I have taken up arms against him, and I seize with pleasure the first opportunity of testifying that feeling towards him. He has long been the object of my admiration; I have no wish to be his enemy, any more than that of France. He should recollect that, in the time of the late emperor Paul, though then only grand-duke, when France was overwhelmed by disasters, and met with nothing but obloquy from the other cabinets, I contributed much, by directing the Russian cabinet to take the lead, to induce the other powers of Europe to recognise the new order of things in your country. If now I entertain different sentiments, it is because France has adopted different principles, which have given the



European powers just cause of disquietude for their independence. I have been called on by them to concur in establishing an order of things which may tranquillise all parties; and it is to accomplish that purpose that I have come hither. You have been admirably served by fortune, it must be admitted; but I will never desert an ally in distress, or separate my cause from that of the emperor of Germany. He is in a critical situation, but one not beyond the reach of remedy. I lead brave soldiers; and if your master drives me to it, I will command them to do their duty. You are already great and powerful, and by your uniformity of language, feelings, and laws, as well as physical situation, must always be formidable to your neighbours. What need have you of continual aggrandisement? Since the peace of Lunéville, you have acquired first Genoa, and then Italy, which you have subjected to a government which places it entirely at your disposal."

At the close of the conversation, the emperor presented General Savary with a reply to Napoleon's letter, addressed, "To the chief of the French government;" observing at the same time, "Here is my answer; the address does not express the title he has of late assumed. I attach no importance to such trifles." Savary found the Russian generals eager for the contest, and inflated with a vain-glorious sense of their own prowess and military skill. This impression Napoleon desired to strengthen, and thus induce the impetuosity of the Russians to lead them into a snare which he had laid for them. He therefore sent Savary again to the camp of the enemy, to propose an interview between the French and Russian emperors. Alexander declined the interview; but sent Prince Dolgoruki to propose conditions to Napoleon. The Russian was received at the outposts of the French camp by the emperor, when the latter, having just finished the inspection of his advanced posts, had nothing about him to strike a vulgar mind. Dolgoruki behaved with an arrogance which showed the delusion of his countrymen, and terminated the negotiation. The emperor dismissed him with the observation, that they would settle elsewhere than in diplomatic conferences the quarrel which divided the policy of the two empires. Napoleon, however, appears to have respected the military character of the Russians. He told his soldiers that they were going to meet a

new enemy, "who had been brought from the ends of the world by the gold of England." Then, in allusion to the high character borne by the Russian infantry, he added—"This contest is of much importance to the honour of the French infantry. The question must be now finally settled, whether the French infantry be the first or the second in Europe." The Russians, deceived by the artifice of Napoleon, were eager for battle. "He is falling back," said the staff of officers who surrounded Alexander; "he is in full retreat; we must rush upon him and overwhelm him."

Notwithstanding this enthusiasm, the allies advanced but slowly; and Napoleon remained during the whole of two days on horseback, at the advanced posts, watching their movements. After surveying the heights of Pratzen, he said to his generals, "If I wished to prevent the enemy from passing, it is here that I should station myself; but that would only lead to an ordinary battle, and I desire decisive success. If, on the other hand, I draw back my right towards Brünn, and the Russians pass these heights, they are irretrievably ruined." Acting upon this principle, he drew back the French right, as if it was fearful of encountering the enemy. On the morning of the 1st of December, Napoleon beheld the columns of the enemy moving across his position, and saw that it was evident the resolution to turn the right flank of his army had been decidedly taken. Then, with the prophetic anticipation of military genius, he exclaimed, "To-morrow, before nightfall, that army is my own."

The Russian power was commanded by Generals Kutusoff and Buxhovden, and the reserve was under the orders of the Grand-duke Constantine. The Austrians were led by Prince John of Lichtenstein. Their allied forces amounted to about 80,000 men, of whom 15,000 were cavalry. Napoleon was on horseback by four o'clock in the morning of the day of battle—the 2nd of December. His soldiers were buried in sleep, unconscious of the dangers they were about to undergo, or of the triumph they were to achieve. A bright winter's sun at length revealed the position of the enemy; and he saw his expectations concerning their movements confirmed. Having given directions to his marshals for the attack, he rode through the foremost ranks of the army, and exclaimed, "Soldiers! the enemy has imprudently exposed himself to your



blows; we shall finish the war with a clap of thunder."

The left wing of the Russian army at first assailed the French with such violence, that the latter were driven back; and before Marshal Davoust could arrive on the spot to succour them, the right wing of the French army appeared completely turned. When he did so, he attacked the Russians while disordered by success, and not only arrested their advance, but took from them six pieces of cannon. The Russians, however, returned in greater force; and the conflict was maintained on both sides with much bloodshed and obstinacy.

While this furious combat was proceeding on the right of the French army, Marshal Soult had attacked the position on which depended the issue of the battle. At a signal given by Napoleon, the powerful corps of Soult was suddenly thrown on the Russian centre while it was in open columns of march, just beginning to ascend the slopes of the Pratzen. Kutusoff then saw his danger, and did everything that was possible to repair the error which had been committed. The emperors Alexander and Francis were both with the centre column. Prince Czartoryski, who stood between them, remarked to the former the nimble and decided step with which the French were ascending the plateau, without returning the fire of the Russians. At this sight, Alexander is said to have lost all the confidence he had until then possessed, and to have conceived a sinister presentiment which never left him during the engagement. Before the hasty preparations of the allies could be complete, the first line of Soult had ascended the heights, and attacked the Russian front with so much impetuosity, that its first line was at once broken and driven back upon the second; and after two hours of desperate fighting, the heights of Pratzen were carried, six battalions were cut to pieces, and the French were pursuing the Russians and Austrians, who were hurled in confusion down the declivities of that plateau.

At the same time, a desperate and almost separate battle was fought between the French left and the right of the allies. The French, under Lannes and Murat, in this direction also surprised the combined forces in their line of march. The Russian right were astonished at finding themselves suddenly assailed by French columns emerging, in battle array, out of the mist. The sur-

prise was so complete, that the reserve, under the Grand-duke Constantine, was one of the first divisions to find itself engaged. Though surprised, the Russians were undaunted, and, under cover of the fire of their artillery, which was rapidly brought forward, their columns wheeled into line. A fierce conflict followed, in which the splendid Russian cavalry—the Hulans of the guard—charged that of the French, and, having broken it, dashed through the first line of the French, and swept through the openings between the second. There they were in their turn charged by Murat, and driven back in such disorder, that, what with the sabres of the cavalry of the latter, and the flanking fire of the infantry through which they were driven, nearly half their number were left dead or wounded on the ground.

The struggle was resumed in the centre, where the Russian imperial guard, led by the Grand-duke Constantine, charged the French in flank, and broke them by the force of the shock. Napoleon sent General Rapp with the cavalry of the guard to their relief. The Russians were then hurled back with the loss of their artillery. They rallied, and on being reinforced by the regiment of the chevalier guards (a corps in which all the privates were gentlemen), returned to the charge. Both imperial guards met in full career; the shock was terrible; and the most desperate cavalry action that had taken place during the war ensued, and lasted for above five minutes. The French horse were driven back, and the Russians pursued them with loud shouts and in some disorder. While doing so, they were assailed in flank by a powerful reserve of the French army, composed of the very flower of the guards, mounted on spirited chargers. A furious contest ensued betwixt them and Constantine's chevalier guards. The resolution and vigour of the combatants were equal; squadron to squadron, man to man, they fought with invincible firmness, and soon the ground was strewn with the dead and the dying. The Russians were at length compelled to yield to the enthusiastic valour of the French. The cavalry and infantry of their guard gave way; and, after losing their artillery and standards, were driven back in confusion almost to the walls of Austerlitz.

The allied armies no longer fought for victory, but for existence. Napoleon brought forward his reserves, and rapidly followed



up his success. The allied centre had been driven back above a mile from the field of battle, and the left wing was exposed to the most imminent danger. Assailed on all sides, the remnant of the Russian and Austrian army was at length overwhelmed. Great numbers sought to save themselves by crossing, with their artillery and cavalry, the frozen lake of Satschan. The ice, weakened by the warmth of a fine day, gave way in some places beneath the weight of the men, horses, and cannon; and in those spots the retreating Russians were engulfed beneath it. Napoleon, perceiving this, ordered a battery of the guard to fire on those parts of the ice which still held firm. The execution of this command was followed by a frightful yell which arose from nearly 2,000 drowning men, who sunk and perished beneath the shattered ice. One unfortunate column of the Russians yet remained upon the field, and, under General Doctorow, behaved in the most courageous manner, and endeavoured to cut a path for its retreat. A last and severe combat ensued; and part succeeded in escaping, but the rest were sabred by Murat's dragoons. The disorder was frightful; the rout complete. The sovereigns of Russia and Prussia fled from the field on which the victorious French were shouting "*Vive l'Empereur!*" Alexander was deeply dejected. Francis, more tranquil, bore the disaster with great composure. He had at least one consolation; the Russians could no longer assert that the cowardice of the Austrians constituted all the glory of Napoleon. The two princes retreated precipitately over the plains of Moravia, amidst profound darkness, separated from their households, and liable to be insulted through the barbarity of their own soldiers.

The battle of Austerlitz, or of the "three emperors," as the French term it, is regarded as the most brilliant of all the victories of Napoleon, and the one in which he most exhibited his astounding military genius. He had re-established his superiority in Europe, and inflicted a terrible blow upon his enemies. The loss of the allies amounted to no less than 30,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The victors also retained, as trophies, 180 pieces of cannon, 400 caissons, and 45 standards. The loss of the French, in killed and wounded, has been differently estimated at from 7,000 to 12,000.

The day after the battle, the emperor

Francis dispatched Prince John of Lichtenstein to demand an interview with Napoleon. "You want a suspension of arms," said the latter to him; "but before I grant you an armistice, you must break with the Russians. They must retire; we will treat separately. I will afterwards make a separate peace with the emperor Alexander, or, if not, I will beat him again. As for the house of Austria, I must have guarantees that she will not again take up arms against me. It was not I that began this war. But, first of all, no more Russians! no more of your levies *en masse* in Hungary and Bohemia!" The French emperor then consented to an interview with the Austrian monarch, which took place the following day in the open air, near a mill, within three leagues of Austerlitz. The two emperors embraced when they met, and Francis addressed his conqueror as "Sir, my brother." It is said that he meanly threw the whole blame of the war upon the English; adding, that they were a set of selfish traffickers, who would set the continent on fire in order to secure to themselves the commerce of the world. The conference lasted upwards of an hour, and terminated with an agreement upon conditions dictated by Napoleon. "Take my advice," said the latter to Francis, "do not mix up your cause with that of the emperor Alexander. Russia, alone, can now only wage a *fancy war* in Europe. Vanquished, she retires to her deserts, and you—you pay with your provinces the costs of the war." By the conditions to which the humbled Francis submitted, the French were to keep possession of all their conquests in Moravia and Hungary, Upper and Lower Austria, the Tyrol, Venice, Carinthia, Styria, Carniola, Goritz, Istria, Bohemia, and the circle of Montabar. The Russians were to be compelled to evacuate the Austrian states within fifteen days; nor was any foreign army whatever to be admitted into the latter—a condition which doubtless referred to the Prussians. Napoleon perfectly understood the duplicity of the king of Prussia; and when he was congratulated, after the battle, upon his victory, observed with a sneer, that the Prussian compliments had been intended for others, but that fortune had transferred them to him.

When the terms agreed to between the emperors of France and Austria were communicated to Alexander by General Savary, the humbled autocrat observed—"Your master has shown himself very great. I



acknowledge all the power of his genius; and, as for myself, I shall retire, since my ally is satisfied." He then ordered a retreat, and, on the 6th of December, was on his way back to St. Petersburg. Some French writers assert, that Alexander and the Russian army was surrounded, and that they owed their escape to the magnanimity of Napoleon. By others, the Russian autocrat is described as saving himself and army by an exercise of duplicity. They say that he deceived General Davoust, who followed closely on his rear, by sending word to him that an armistice was concluded—a statement from which it would be supposed that he was included in it; such not being the fact, the armistice existing only between the French and the Austrians. It is probable that Napoleon did not greatly desire to intercept the retreat of the humiliated Russians, and thus renew the struggle. He was aware that his own position in the heart of Moravia, far from the frontiers of France and from his reinforcements, after the winter had set in, would have become a critical one had he chosen to prolong the war. Besides, he had done enough for one campaign, in which Austria had been laid prostrate for a time, and Russia had suffered severely both in her resources and her reputation; while the power and military glory of France had been increased to an extent not readily to be estimated.

It is true that Austria might possibly have been dismembered by Napoleon; but policy dictated its preservation. The acute Talleyrand, the day after the battle, urged on the conqueror the necessity of treating Austria with moderation, and even generosity. That power, observed the minister, had been considerably diminished during the last two centuries, and ought, therefore, to be much less an object of jealousy than formerly. A new power had arisen which should take its place in this respect; that was Russia; and against this latter, Austria, so far from being a danger, was a useful barrier. Austria, a vast aggregation of nations foreign to each other—as Austrians, Slavonians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Italians—might easily fall to pieces, if the bond, already feeble, that held together the heterogeneous elements of which it was composed, were to be further weakened; and its

wrecks would have more tendency to attach themselves to Russia than to France. They ought, therefore, he contended, to desist from inflicting blows upon Austria, and even to indemnify her for the losses she was about to sustain. The indemnification that Talleyrand proposed was, to confer the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia upon Austria; which, he said, would be worth more than Italy itself; that they would console Austria for her losses—alienate her from Russia; render her, in regard to the latter, the bulwark of the Ottoman empire, as she was already that of Europe. These provinces, he added, after embroiling her with Russia, would embroil her with England, and thus compel her to become the ally of France.

When Napoleon returned to Paris, he was received with the wildest enthusiasm, which was much enhanced by the rapidity with which he had concluded the brilliant campaign from which he had just returned. The municipality voted a monument to the emperor and to the army. The cannon which had been captured from the enemy, to the number of 500 pieces, was melted down and converted into a triumphal column, surrounded by a statue, in bronze, of the victor who had triumphed over such powerful combinations against France. In an exposition which Napoleon caused to be drawn up, of the state of the empire, the advantages which France had derived from the successive coalitions which had been formed against it, were thus alluded to:—"The first coalition, concluded by the treaty of Campo Formio, gave the republic the frontier of the line, and the states which now form the kingdom of Italy; the second invested it with Piedmont; the third united to its federal system Venice and Naples. Let England be now convinced of its impotence, and not attempt a fourth coalition, even if subsequent events should render such a measure practicable. The house of Naples has irrevocably lost its dominions; Russia owes the escape of its army solely to the capitulation which our generosity awarded; the Italian peninsula, as a whole, forms a part of the great empire; the emperor has guaranteed, as chief supreme, the sovereigns and constitutions which compose its several parts."



## CHAPTER XLVI.

A RUSSIAN MINISTER SIGNS A TREATY OF PEACE WITH FRANCE, BUT ALEXANDER REFUSES TO RATIFY IT; PRUSSIA DECLARES WAR AGAINST FRANCE; PROSTRATION OF PRUSSIA BY NAPOLEON; THE RUSSIAN ARMY ADVANCES TO THE VISTULA; NAPOLEON TALKS OF THE RECONSTITUTION OF POLAND; HE ENTERS WARSAW; THE RUSSIANS RETREAT BEFORE HIM; BATTLES OF PULTUSK AND OF EYLAU; NAPOLEON RETIRES TO THE VISTULA, AND PROPOSES PEACE TO PRUSSIA; NAPOLEON TAKES DANTZIC; BATTLE OF HELLSBURG; MURDEROUS DEFEAT OF THE RUSSIANS AT THE GREAT BATTLE OF FRIEDLAND; ALEXANDER DESIRES PEACE; HIS ADVANCES ARE READILY MET BY NAPOLEON; ARMISTICE, AND AMICABLE INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND RUSSIAN OFFICERS; INTERVIEW OF THE TWO EMPEROES ON THE NIEMEN; TREATY OF TILSIT; BASE CONDUCT OF ALEXANDER TOWARDS THE KING OF PRUSSIA; SECRET ARTICLES OF THE TREATY BY WHICH NAPOLEON AND ALEXANDER AGREE TO DIVIDE THE DOMINION OF THE WORLD BETWEEN THEM; REMARKS ON THE ALLIANCE OF THE TWO EMPERORS.

PEACE between Austria and France was signed at Presburg, in Hungary, on the 26th of December, 1805. Austria gave up the Venetian provinces and Dalmatia to the kingdom of Italy; Tyrol to the elector of Bavaria, and other districts; besides a tribute to France of 100,000,000 of francs. Thus a war which was to have checked the preponderance of Napoleon in Italy, left that country entirely at his disposal, and established his influence over a great part of Germany, where, having raised the electors of Bavaria and Wurtemberg to the rank of kings, he placed himself at the head of all the smaller states, which he formed into a league, under his protection, with the title of the CONFEDERATION OF THE RHINE. The old German empire was thus dissolved; and Francis, renouncing his title of emperor of Germany, assumed, in lieu of it, that of emperor of Austria.

Alexander was no party to the peace of Presburg; and, according to the terms of the coalition, he had no right to enter on a peace with France without consulting and obtaining the consent of England. The latter country acted strictly up to these conditions; and Mr. Fox, then prime minister, refused to entertain overtures of peace from France, unless they were acceded to by Russia. "Do you wish us to treat," said he to Talleyrand, "conjointly with Russia? We answer—Yes. Do you wish us to enter into a separate treaty independent of that power?—No!" Scruples of this kind were not entertained by Alexander, and M. D'Oubril, the Russian plenipotentiary at Paris, signed a treaty of peace with France, on behalf of Russia, on the 20th of July, 1806. This treaty Alexander afterwards refused to ratify, on the pretence that his minister had exceeded the instructions given to him. D'Oubril was accordingly disgraced; but the deception practised by

Alexander was too transparent to escape ultimate detection. Some months had been occupied in the negotiations between the two courts; and during this period, arrangements were being made for a fourth coalition against France. The negotiations which led to the signature of the treaty, had been carried on for the purpose of gaining the requisite time for this proceeding.

The Prussian minister congratulated Napoleon on his victory at Austerlitz, though he had recently made a secret treaty with Alexander to take up arms, under certain conditions, against the French emperor. The latter was aware of this perfidy; and when Count Haugwitz, the Prussian envoy, said to him, after the battle, "Thank God, you have conquered," observed sarcastically, "If I had lost, he would have said the same to the emperors of Austria and Russia." Still Napoleon considered it advisable to bribe Prussia into a continuance of neutrality; and Frederic William received the electorate of Hanover as the reward of his duplicity. George III. was elector of Hanover; and at the period of receiving this gift, Prussia enjoyed the full confidence of England, whose rights in that province were thus ceded away by an enemy and accepted by an ally. Prussia adopted the treaty conferring on her this dangerous gift, but resolved to defer the completion of it until a general peace should be agreed to, and the consent of the king of England obtained. This insidious condition was indignantly rejected by Napoleon, and a second convention was concluded at Paris, on the 15th of February, 1806, by which Frederic William declared that he received Hanover as a lawful conquest of Napoleon!

England retaliated by a declaration of war against Prussia; and in a few months several hundred Prussian vessels were seized by the English cruisers. Sweden,



the ally of England, also threatened to invade Prussia. In the meantime, Napoleon, who hated Prussia and despised her treacherous monarch, altered his tone towards the latter. The *Moniteur* began to talk of Prussia as a secondary power, which assumed a tone which its extent and position did not warrant. This was one cause of offence to the weak Frederic William. Another was, that in some fruitless negotiations for peace which Napoleon carried on with England, he had offered to restore Hanover to that power. A third was, that the confederation of the Rhine extended round a great part of the Prussian frontiers, and created a feeling of jealousy and uneasiness on the part of the Prussian king. The foundation of the Rhenish Confederation, which, as Napoleon openly said, would be as useful to him against Prussia as against Austria, was only notified by him to the Prussian cabinet after it was completely established; though such an union of most of the members of the German empire would not have been proposed to any of them without previously consulting Prussia, if Frederic William had been regarded by Napoleon with the respect due to the head of one of the great European kingdoms. On the 1st of October, 1806, the Prussian minister at Paris presented a note to M. Talleyrand, in which, after remarking, "that the king, his master, saw around his territories none but French soldiers or vassals of France, ready to march at her beck," a demand was made that the French troops should evacuate the German territory. Napoleon, in a defiant tone, replied, that "to provoke the enmity of France was as senseless a course as to pretend to withstand the waves of the ocean." These circumstances had induced the king of Prussia to accede to the proposal of the emperor Alexander, who promised to assist him with a powerful army if he would declare war against France.

England suspended her hostile intentions against Prussia, that she might act against France without embarrassment; and Frederic William presented an *ultimatum* to Napoleon, and, on its rejection, issued a

manifesto, which was equivalent to a declaration of war. Thus Prussia was, by the inexorable tide of events, drawn, in spite of the evasions of its king, into active hostilities against France, and an alliance with Russia against that power.

The Prussian army was composed of troops who, down to the very drummers, thought themselves equal to the soldiers with whom Frederic the Great had, for seven years, resisted nearly the whole of Europe. It was also increased by the numerous and well-disciplined contingents of the elector and dukes of Saxony, the elector of Hesse-Cassel, the Duke of Brunswick, and several other princes, who had concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with the king of Prussia. But Frederic William was no match for the antagonist whose wrath he had provoked, and he had taken a step which he was bitterly to repent. Napoleon crossed the Rhine with an immense army, and soon attacked the Prussians. Marshal Davoust arrested Frederic William, and the division under his command, at the village of Auerstadt, in Upper Saxony. A severe and sanguinary battle followed on the 14th of October, in which the Prussian monarch sustained a severe defeat, and was compelled to retreat. On the same day the other division of the Prussian army, commanded by the Duke of Brunswick, was encountered by the French under Napoleon on the fatal field of Jena, where, after a long and violently-contested struggle, the Prussians were driven in disorder from the field. Their loss, in the two battles, is estimated at about 20,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The results were most disastrous. Most of the Prussian divisions were surrounded and obliged to lay down their arms. Almost all their strong fortresses—Magdeburg, Spandau, Kustrin, Stettin, Hameln—surrendered without firing a shot. The work of the Great Frederic's whole life crumbled to pieces in a few weeks. About a fortnight after the double victory of the French, Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph, and from that capital he issued his well-known decree against British commerce.\* Frede-

\* By it the British islands were to be considered as in a state of blockade by all the continent. All correspondence or trade with England was forbidden under most severe penalties. All articles of English manufacture, or produce of the British colonies, were considered contraband. Property of every kind belonging to British subjects, wherever found, was declared lawful prize. All letters to and from England

were to be detained and opened at the post-office. This decree eventually exercised a powerful influence on the interests of Russia and the conduct of the emperor Alexander. It was even one of the remote causes of the ruin of Napoleon himself. M. Thiers (*Consulate and the Empire*) observes—"The effect of this decree on the opinions of Europe was immense. Some regarded it as a revolting excess of despotism ;



ric William had fled a fugitive to Königsberg, and Prussia lay prostrate at the feet of its conqueror. So rapid were all their proceedings, that Napoleon, in an address to his army, observed—"Our entrance into Potsdam and Berlin has preceded the fame of our victories." He added—"We have made 60,000 prisoners, taken 65 standards (among which are the colours of the king of Prussia's guards), 600 pieces of cannon, and three fortresses; among the prisoners there are twenty generals. But notwithstanding all this, more than half our troops regret not having fired a single musket."

This terrible calamity fell upon Prussia before the emperor Alexander had time to reach the theatre of war. He had been actively employed in repairing the losses which his army had sustained in the campaign of Austerlitz. Thirty fresh squadrons and fifty-one battalions had been added to its amount; all the chasms occasioned by the casualties of war supplied, and the new French organisation into divisions universally adopted. An attempt was also made, in a proclamation which excited the merited ridicule and condemnation of a great part of Europe, to give a religious character to the war, and to excite the debased superstitions of the Russian soldiers against their foe. "Buonaparte," said this arrogant, and in some respects blasphemous, proclamation, which was nevertheless read in all the Russian churches—"after having, by open force or secret intrigue, extended his power over the countries which he oppresses, menaces Russia, which Heaven protects. It is for you to prevent the destroyer of peace, of the faith, and of the happiness of mankind, from seducing the orthodox Christians. He has trampled under foot every principle of truth; in Egypt he preached the Koran of Mohammed; in France manifested his contempt for the religion of Jesus Christ by convoking Jewish synagogues. Do you love your fellow-creatures? Fly the persecutor of Christians. Do you desire to be saved? Oppose an invincible barrier to his advances. He has dared to the combat God and Russia: *prove that you are the defenders of the Most High*, and of your country. Chase far from your frontiers that monster;

punish his barbarity to so many innocent persons, whose blood cries aloud to Heaven for vengeance. God will hear the prayer of the faithful; he will shield you with his power; he will cover you with his grace. Your exploits will be celebrated by the church and by your country; immortal crowns or abodes of eternal felicity await you."

Alexander and his troops had scarcely reached the frontiers of Germany, when they received information of the defeat of the Prussians at Auerstadt and at Jena. Surprised and alarmed, Alexander immediately retreated across the Vistula. The Russian troops consisted of a body of 50,000 men, under General Benningsen; a second force, of the same power, under General Buxhovden; and a reserve was organised under the Swedish general Essen; while bodies of Cossacks preceded the regular troops. Part of General Michelson's troops were ascending the Dniester, and hastening to Poland. Such were the then disposable forces of the great Russian empire, which showed, for the second time, that its resources were not equal to its pretensions. Joined to the Prussians, and while awaiting the reserve of General Essen, the Russians could not bring to the Vistula a force reaching 120,000 men. This would have been very insufficient to resist the progress of Napoleon, if the climate had not been a powerful auxiliary to the soldiers of the North. By the climate we mean, not merely the cold, but the soil; the difficulty of marching and subsisting in the immense plains of Poland, alternately muddy and sandy, and where the woods exceed in extent the part under cultivation.

Both Alexander and the miserable Frederic William flattered themselves, that if a single success crowned their efforts, Austria would violate the neutrality to which she had so recently pledged herself, and declare in their favour; but Austria was yet suffering too severely from the chastisement she had received, to suffer her to act so perfidious a part for the present. Napoleon seems to have been aware of this; for he was full of confidence. "Your majesty," he wrote to the king of Prussia, "has sent me word that you have thrown yourself into

others as a stroke of profound policy; all as an extraordinary act, proportioned to the conflict of giants maintained by England and France against each other, the one daring to seize the dominion of the sea, hitherto the common route of nations, and to interdict all commerce to her enemies; the other

aiming at the entire occupation of the continent by force of arms, to reply to the closing of the sea by the closing of the land. Unheard-of spectacle, without example in the past and probably in the future, exhibited at this moment by the unchained passions of the two greatest nations of the earth!"



the arms of Russia. Time will show whether you have chosen the better and more efficacious part. You have taken up the dice-box to play; the dice will decide."

Napoleon, to increase the perplexity of the northern autocrat, talked of the reconstitution of Poland as a kingdom—a measure he never intended to effect. Yet, willing to augment his own strength and to weaken his enemy by turning to account the well-known disaffection of the Poles towards their Russian rulers, he introduced the following questions in one of his proclamations:—"The love which the Poles entertain for their country, and the sentiment of nationality, is not only preserved entire in the heart of the people, but it has become more profound from misfortune. Their first passion—the universal wish—is to become again a nation. The rich issue from their *châteaux* to demand, with loud cries, the re-establishment of the nation, and to offer their children, their fortune, their influence, in the cause. That spectacle is truly touching. Already they have everywhere resumed their ancient costumes, their ancient customs. Shall the Polish throne be re-established? Shall the 'great nation' secure for it respect and independence? Shall she recall it to life from the grave? God only, who directs all human affairs, can solve this great mystery." These observations, without binding the emperor to the performance of any act in favour of the Poles, yet won for him the attachment of that people, and threatened Alexander with an insurrection in the Polish dominions. "I love the Poles," said Napoleon to General Rapp, after receiving a deputation from that nation; "their ardour pleases me. I could wish to render them an independent people, but it is no easy undertaking. Too many nations are interested in their spoils—Austria, Russia, Prussia. If the match is once lighted, there is no saying where it would stop. My first duty is towards France; and it is no part of it to sacrifice its interests to Poland; that would lead us too far. We must leave its destinies in the hands of the supreme disposer of all things—to Time. It will possibly teach us, hereafter, what course we ought to pursue."

Napoleon was so successful in this movement, that the Russian government, in alarm, sent General Benningsen to Warsaw to quell the rising storm, and overawe the disaffection evinced by the people. Napoleon at once saw the difficulties in which he would

involve the Russian general by attacking him when surrounded by an infuriated population, ready on the first favourable opportunity to join the invader. The emperor, therefore, led his army into Poland, where the people received him with enthusiasm, while great numbers organised themselves into a military force with amazing rapidity, and followed his standard.

The van of the French army, under Murat, moved forward to attack Benningsen in his quarters at Warsaw. After several unsuccessful *rencontres* on the part of the latter, he effected his retreat from Warsaw, which the French commander entered triumphantly on the 28th of November. Benningsen had taken up a position behind the Vistula, but the impetuous Murat soon compelled him to make another retrograde movement, and to shelter himself behind the stream of the Bug. From this spot he felt it prudent to shift his quarters still further rearward, placing between himself and the pursuing French general the river Ukra, where the Russian generalissimo, Field-marshal Kaminskoi, with three other divisions of the autocrat's army, had arrived and pitched their tents. Napoleon in person reached the Ukra on the 23rd of December, and made the passage of that river. Kaminskoi then ordered the whole of his army to fall back, and take up a position on the line of the river Niemen, in Lithuania. General Benningsen suffered severely, being closely followed by the enemy, who harassed him by hanging on his rear, and made a great number of prisoners, besides capturing upwards of thirty pieces of cannon, in the various skirmishes which occurred, on passing the Vistula and elsewhere, between the pursuers and the pursued. Benningsen at length ventured to make a stand at Pultusk, notwithstanding the imperative orders of the commander-in-chief, Kaminskoi, to retreat at all hazards. At this place a long-contested and murderous battle took place on the 26th of December. The slaughter on each side was enormous, and both French and Russians claimed the victory. Some accounts represent the latter as having lost 12,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; while they deny that their loss exceeded 5,000, and represent that of the French as amounting to upwards of 10,000. The French, on their side, contended that their loss did not exceed 7,000. So conflicting are the accounts, that it is difficult to say to which side the advantage attached;



but it is probable that both parties suffered very severely, and that neither could claim a victory in the usual acceptance of that word. The French, however, remained masters of the ground on which they had fought, and from whence they retired the next day into winter quarters in the city of Warsaw.

Alexander was too anxious for his own safety and the preservation of the military glory of his empire, to allow his troops to remain idle, notwithstanding the inclemency of the season, and the almost impracticable state of the roads. He superseded Kamin-skoi as commander-in-chief, that general's mind having given way under the difficulties of his position, and appointed Benningsen in his place; and the French were continually harassed by the Russians, in their winter quarters. The emperor also endeavoured to relieve his ally the king of Prussia, who was still shut up in Königsberg, together with such troops as he had been able to collect around him, where they were already suffering from want of provisions. To accomplish the latter object Alexander proceeded to Mohringen—a Russian town, fifty-six miles south-south-west from Königsberg. Here he was opposed by a French army under Marshal Bernadotte; for the activity of the Russians had compelled Napoleon in some measure to alter his plan with respect to remaining in winter quarters. A sharp engagement followed on the 25th of January, 1807. At first victory seemed to incline to the Russians; but the French afterwards precipitated themselves with such fury upon their opponents, that the Russian forces were completely flanked and driven from the field. Still the French obtained no decisive advantage, and were not in a condition to claim a victory.

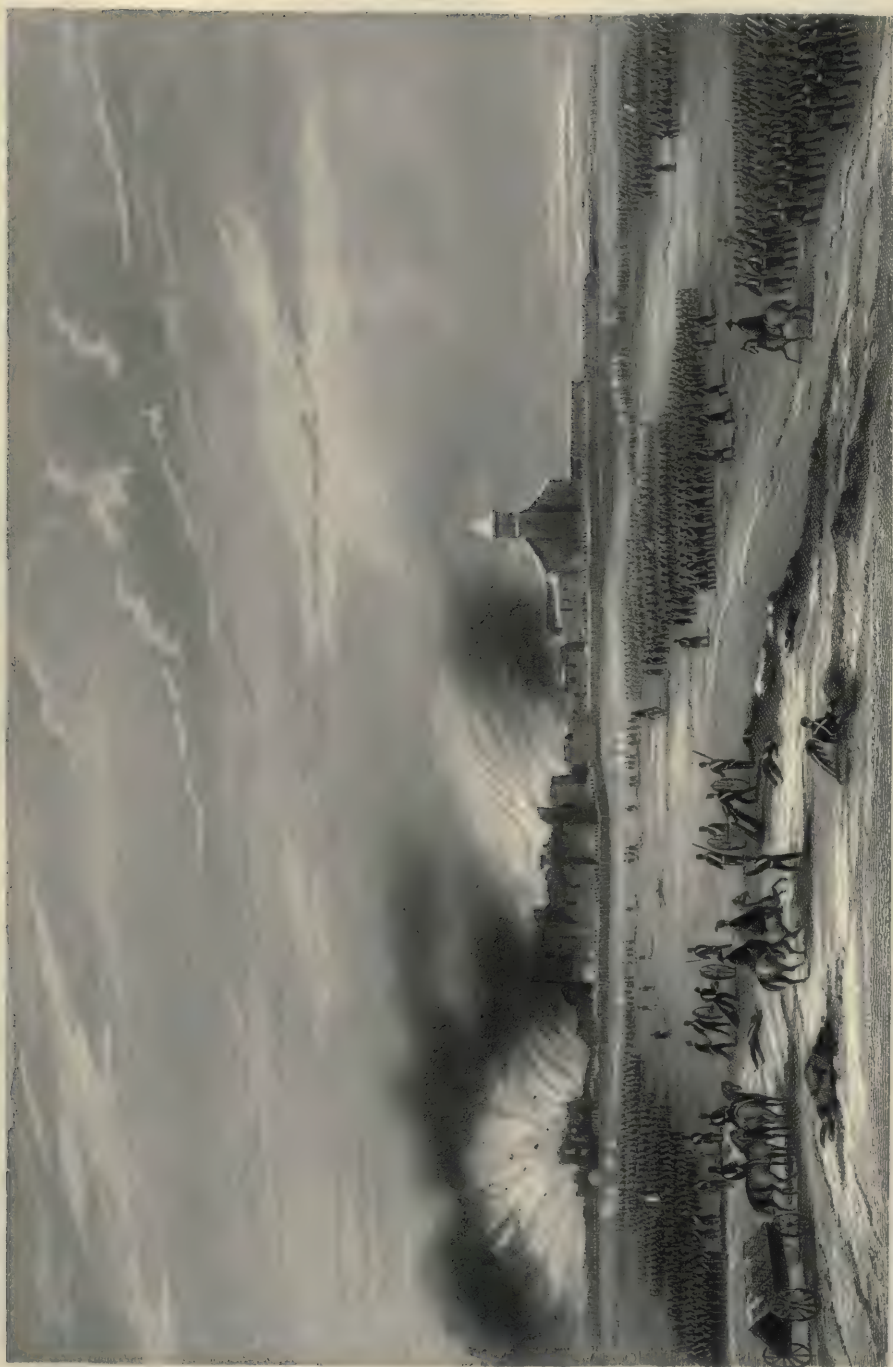
By the end of January, surprised at the tenacity with which the Russians kept the field, Napoleon broke up his quarters, and, concentrating his forces, resumed the offensive. He designed to get to the rear of the Russian camp, and thus to cut off the enemy's communication with his resources. General Benningsen became aware of this design by means of an intercepted despatch, and counter-marched with a skill which entirely frustrated the tactics of his opponent, who was, consequently, under the necessity of executing a long series of manœuvres, which, at that dreary season, involved the extremity of hardship.

Even the Russian troops, accustomed as

they were to the rigours of a northern climate, suffered severely from the lengthened marches they were compelled to make at that inclement period, the miseries of which were enhanced by the pangs of hunger. In fact, the Russian army was in want of almost everything except weapons and ammunition. The Poles were all hostile; the Russian treasury was exhausted; and the commander-in-chief unable to cope in the market, which was monopolised by Jews, with the golden pieces of the French. The half-starved Russians had no resource but to prowl about and dig in the earth for the corn and provisions the Polish peasantry concealed. This labour, added to their military duties, left them scarcely any time for repose; and when these unfortunate men lay down to sleep, they had no bed but the snow, no shelter but the sky, no covering but rags. Under such painful circumstances, they felt it was better to fight than to starve; better to die quickly on the bayonets and beneath the grapeshot of the French, than to perish slowly from starvation. They therefore became clamorous for action, and loudly demanded to be led to battle, instead of traversing to and fro on the almost impassable roads.

Benningsen, consequently, resolved to make a stand at the town of Eylau, about twenty-four miles south-east of Königsberg, where he encamped with his whole army, consisting of about 90,000 men. The day before the battle Napoleon attacked the town, or rather village, which was several times taken and retaken with horrible carnage; but towards evening it remained in the hands of the French. The French emperor, who commanded in person, spent the whole night in making the requisite preparations for the approaching struggle. It commenced at dawn on the following day, the 8th of February. The Russians were the assailants, and began by opening a cannonade upon the village. Napoleon responded by ordering a cannonade against an eminence in possession of the Russians, which commanded the entrance to the plain, and was essential to the offensive operations of his army. As the opposing forces were within half gun-shot of each other, nearly every shot took effect, and the slaughter that ensued was terrific. During these operations a sudden and dense fall of snow, accompanied by a mist that continued for half-an-hour, involved both armies in comparative darkness. This had nearly





BATTLE OF SYLAU.







proved fatal to the French; for some of their columns, inclining too much to the left, became completely separated from each other. This error was retrieved by the masterly manœuvres of the cavalry under Murat, and the impetuosity with which Davoust, falling upon the rear of the Russians, dislodged them from the eminence they had so obstinately retained. During fourteen hours the battle raged with unabated fury, and the chances of victory continually changed sides. The French made repeated and furious attacks on the Russian infantry, which stood like walls of brass, and never yielded to these terrible onslaughts. The battle lasted until ten o'clock at night, when the Russians retired to the position they occupied in the morning. Half-starved and half-naked as they were, they had displayed a heroism on the field which astonished their enemies. Some Prussian columns, under General Lestocq, also behaved with great intrepidity. Again both Russians and French claimed the victory, which it is difficult to assign to either. Napoleon had received the severest check he had experienced since the commencement of his military career; and if it is conceded that he gained a victory, it was one whose results were equivalent, in all but the name, to a defeat.

During this battle the emperor Napoleon himself narrowly escaped death or captivity. On one occasion the French were swept before a charge of Russian cavalry and Cossacks. The fugitives rushed into Eylau, where Napoleon had stationed himself in the churchyard, on its eastern side. A snow-storm had veiled the advance of the Russians; and clearing away, it now showed their light troops almost at the edge of the town. The serried masses of the old guard stood firm in and around the cemetery; while the branches of the trees above their heads were constantly rent, or falling from the enemy's cannon-balls. Presently a Russian division, following the fugitive French, entered Eylau by the eastern street, and charged, with loud hurrahs, to the foot of the mount, where the emperor was placed with a battery of the imperial guard and his personal escort of a hundred men. Napoleon's presence of mind did not forsake him, and he ordered his little body-guard to form line, in order to check the enemy's advance, and dispatched orders to the old guard to attack the column on one flank, while a brigade of Murat's horse charged it

on the other. The Russians, ignorant of the inestimable prize almost within their grasp, were arrested by the firm attitude of the little band of heroes who formed Napoleon's last resource; and before they could re-form their ranks for a regular conflict, the enemy was upon them on either flank, and almost the whole division was cut to pieces on the spot. "I was never so much struck with anything in my life," said General Bertrand on a subsequent occasion, "as by the emperor at Eylau, at the moment when, alone with some officers of his staff, he was almost trodden under foot by a column of four or five thousand Russians. The emperor was on foot, and Berthier gave orders instantly for the horses to be brought forward; the emperor gave him a reproachful look; and instead, ordered a battalion of his guard, which was at a little distance, to advance. He himself kept his ground as the Russians approached, repeating frequently the words—'What boldness! what boldness!' At the sight of the grenadiers of his guard, the Russians made a dead pause; the emperor did not stir, but all around him trembled."

The loss on both sides had been terrific, and it is affirmed that about 50,000 killed and wounded were left upon the field; of these, at least half were French. The latter remained for eight days at Eylau, engaged in the burial of their dead. The trophies of victory were nearly equally balanced. The Russians had to boast of the unusual spectacle of twelve eagles taken from their antagonists; while the French had captured sixteen of the Russian guns and fourteen standards. "Never," observes Alison, "was spectacle so dreadful as that field presented on the following morning. Above 50,000 men lay, in the space of two leagues, weltering in blood. The wounds were, for the most part, of the severest kind, from the extraordinary quantity of cannon-balls which had been discharged during the action, and the close proximity of the contending masses to the deadly batteries, which spread grape at half musket-shot through their ranks. Though stretched on the cold snow, and exposed to the severity of an Arctic winter, the sufferers were burning with thirst, and piteous cries were heard on all sides for water, or assistance to extricate the wounded men from beneath the heaps of slain or load of horses, by which they were crushed. Six thousand of these noble animals encumbered the field, or, maddened



with pain, were shrieking aloud amidst the stifled groans of the wounded. Broken gun-carriages, dismounted cannon, fragments of blown-up caissons, scattered balls, lay in wild confusion amidst casques, cuirasses, and burning hamlets, casting a livid light over a field of snow. Subdued by loss of blood, tamed by cold, exhausted by hunger, the foemen lay side by side amidst the general wreck. The Cossack was to be seen beside the Italian; the gay vine-dresser, from the banks of the Garonne, lay athwart the stern peasant from the plains of the Ukraine. The extremity of suffering had extinguished alike the fiercest and the most generous passions. According to his usual custom, Napoleon, in the afternoon, rode over this dreadful field, accompanied by his generals and staff, while the still burning piles of Serpalten and Sausgarten sent volumes of black smoke over the scene of death. But the men exhibited none of their wonted enthusiasm; no cries of '*Vive l'Empereur!*' were heard; the bloody surface echoed only with the cries of suffering or the groans of woe. 'The spectacle,' said Napoleon in his bulletin, 'was fitted to inspire princes with the love of peace and a horror of war!'

The confidence of Napoleon was shaken by the result of the battle of Eylau, and he made overtures of peace to General Benningsen, who sternly replied, "that his master had sent him to fight, and not to negotiate." At midnight the latter held a council of war by a bivouac fire, at which it was deemed expedient to retreat upon Königsberg. The march was commenced almost immediately, though some of the troops did not move until the next morning, when they traversed the field in front of the French, who did not attempt to intercept them. Napoleon withdrew again to the line of the Vistula; and a few days after the battle, he sent General Bertrand with a courteous message to the king of Prussia, who was then at Memel, and offered to restore to that monarch a very large portion of his dominions, on condition that he should consent to a separate peace. Frederic William had been so severely punished for duplicity, that, bitterly remembering the lesson, he acted on this occasion in an honourable manner, and replied that, circumstanced as he was, it was impossible for him to enter into any treaty in which the emperor of Russia did not participate. Napoleon wished to be able to deal with

Russia singly, who, in the former campaign, had been assisted by the Austrians, and in this by the troops of Prussia and the promises of England. The subsidies of this country had previously been advanced with a niggardly hand, and were in this emergency denied altogether. Alexander applied to his ally, the British government, to negotiate for him a loan of £6,000,000 sterling, and make an immediate advance on account. The security offered is said not to have been a bad one, but it was deemed insufficient, and the English ministry declined the transaction. This gave great offence to Alexander, and seriously crippled his exertions against France. From this time he seems to have doubted both the sincerity and generosity of England, and to have begun to consider how he should get out of the coalition with the least possible loss, and derive benefit and aggrandisement from a treaty with Napoleon. Subsequently the English ministry remitted the sum of £500,000 to the court of St. Petersburg; but this subsidy was far from being sufficient for the exigencies of the case, especially as they declined the assistance of a British auxiliary force.

As the Prussian king declined Napoleon's overtures for a separate peace, the latter resolved to punish him by seizing upon Dantzic, and on the few fortresses which yet remained in the hands of the Prussians. Dantzic, though defended with great skill and the most undaunted courage, was forced to yield to the superior tactics of the besiegers, and surrendered on the 7th of May, 1807. The attempts of the Russians to raise the siege only drew further suffering and failures upon themselves; detachments from their army experiencing severe defeats at Braunsburg and Peterswalde. They were also beaten back at other points; and a number of rafts, which had occupied them six weeks to construct, on the Bug, were burnt by the French in two hours.

When Dantzic had fallen, the beleaguering troops, amounting to 25,000 men, rejoined the main army of France; and this, together with new levies, enabled Napoleon to resume offensive operations against General Benningsen, at the head of 180,000 men; while the latter, notwithstanding every exertion to increase his force, could scarcely raise his army to its original number of 90,000. This is to be accounted for by the fact, that it has always been extremely difficult in Russia to raise levies



with promptitude, in consequence of the vast extent of territory over which the troops are scattered, the want of means of transport on so large a scale, and the danger which is incurred by moving masses of soldiers out of those remote territories, which, acquired by fraud or violence, can only be maintained by the constant presence of a military force. In addition to these general causes, recent wars had pressed hard upon the serviceable classes of the population, and left but scanty resources to draw upon. As for the allies of Russia, Prussia already had almost exhausted her strength in her own defence; Sweden was unable to render substantial assistance; and applications for troops were made to England with even less success than had attended that for monetary assistance. The fact was, that England, threatened with an invasion of its own shores by Napoleon, had enough to do at home, and felt that she had contributed sufficiently to the assistance of the continental powers. Moreover, she did not care to assist Alexander to rescue the king of Prussia from a fate which she felt he deserved. She had set aside her own cause of quarrel; yet, though she did not strike, she would not benefit the treacherous power which, while in alliance with her, had accepted Hanover from the hands of the French emperor.

Notwithstanding the enormous preparations of Napoleon for war, he was desirous of peace. The levies which he had made in France had almost exhausted that country, and general murmurs prevailed amongst the people: it was, indeed, physically impossible that France could for many years stand such terrible drains upon the flower of her population. Many expedients were resorted to for stimulating the martial enthusiasm of the people, and numerous military *fêtes* were given to dazzle the imagination of the multitude. Yet the popular ardour languished; painful blanks had been occasioned in thousands of families; the flower of the population of France was perishing in its continuous battles; and a sense of desolation fell upon the minds of the people. Napoleon knew these things; and, conscious of the military difficulties he had to encounter, especially with so powerful and obstinate a foe as Russia, he was, doubtless, sincerely desirous of terminating hostilities. To this Alexander, disgusted with the indifference of England, and

alarmed at the power of the adversary with whom he found himself engaged, was by no means averse. After the fall of Dantzic, Napoleon made that city his head-quarters, and negotiations were secretly carried on between him and the Russian emperor. The nature of them did not transpire; but it appears the emperors were unable to come to terms, and that the negotiations were broken off.

The French soldiers constructed comfortable huts, in which they spent the winter; and all the admirable arrangements of the camp of Boulogne were again put in force amidst the severity of a Polish winter. The huts were arranged in streets, which resembled, in regularity and cleanliness, those of a city. The minds of the soldiers were diverted by constant exercises, warlike games, and reviews; while the agricultural riches of Old Prussia kept them amply supplied with provisions. The Russian army was not so fortunately situated, and was far from being fed and sheltered so well as the French. It was situated around Heilsburg, where a formidable intrenched camp had been constructed. The only contest of any moment which took place while the army occupied this position, was on the 3rd of March, at Guttstadt, which was attacked and carried by Marshal Ney, together with the magazines which it contained. The French, however, having imprudently advanced into the plain beyond that town, several regiments were surrounded by the Cossacks, pierced through, and broken; so that both parties were glad to resume their quarters without having much reason to boast of any considerable advantage. General Benningsen, notwithstanding the disparity of his forces, which had been reinforced to the number of 120,000, was the first to recommence hostilities. The emperor Alexander had arrived at the head-quarters of his army on the 28th of March, and had resided since that time at Bartenstein, a little in the rear of the cantonments of the soldiers. On the 5th of June, the Russians commenced an attack on a strong French division under the command of Marshal Ney. The French lines were attacked at three different points; and although the Russians suffered severely, yet the French were compelled to fall back upon Ackendorf. The following day the Russians renewed the attack, with a serious loss to themselves, and but a slight one to the foe. Still Napoleon deemed it expe-



dient to leave his camp at Finkinstein, join Marshal Ney at the village of Deppen, to which he had retreated, and take the command of the army in person. A sharp engagement then took place on the 8th of June, in which both sides suffered severely. The French now assumed the offensive, seized several of the enemy's camps, and attacked, on the 10th, a division of the Russian forces, consisting of about 17,000 cavalry and several lines of infantry, who, however, repeatedly repulsed them. Yet Benningsen was compelled eventually to give way; but, rallying his troops, he halted at Heilsburg, a Prussian town in the province of Ermeland, seated on the current of the Alle. Here the Russians occupied a very strong position, and the main army lay surrounded by fortifications. Another sanguinary engagement ensued, and the Russians maintained their ground for a whole day, in the face of an enemy far superior to themselves, both with respect to numbers and discipline. The carnage was dreadful; the French suffered severely; but the Russian army was ultimately driven from its position, and compelled to continue its retreat, which it did in so precipitate a manner, as to excite some suspicions that the emperor Alexander was no longer in earnest in the contest, and had allowed his troops to be beaten in consequence of some secret understanding to that effect between himself and the emperor Napoleon.

Early on the morning of the 12th, the French entered Heilsburg in triumph, and took possession of the provisions, magazines, and munitions which the Russians had abandoned. On the afternoon of the same day, Napoleon fixed his head-quarters at Eylau, which had been the scene of so terrible a battle in the preceding February. A great change had taken place in this region since the French had last encamped on its broad fields. Instead of a dreary waste of ice and snow, over which the fires of their melancholy bivouacs gleamed with a lurid light that gave increased horrors to the scene, the reviving summer had spread an exquisite picture of fertility. But the clustering woods, the tranquil pastures, and orderly villages that animated the scene, were destined to be despoiled by the crushing footsteps of legions, who, spreading ruin on their track, looked upon such sights with admiration only as they presented the means for sustentation and a favourable ground for military operations.

The Russians retreated across the Alle and thus placed that stream between themselves and their pursuers. They then took up their position opposite the town of Friedland. In the meantime Napoleon dispatched a division of the army, under Marshal Soult, to manœuvre before Königsberg, where the Russian magazines were placed, while he himself marched with the grand army upon Friedland to attack the Russians. General Benningsen and his army occupied a highly advantageous position; a fact which was instantly perceived by Napoleon. He therefore left no stratagem unattempted to induce his opponent to recross the river to its western bank, where he possessed decided advantages for the disposition of his troops, and where the Russians, in the event of defeat, would be under the necessity of defiling through the town and over the narrow bridge, which would render retreat almost impracticable. To deceive the enemy, he allowed only a small part of his force to be seen; and General Benningsen supposed that the French troops he beheld consisted chiefly of a division which had suffered severely at Heilsberg. Under these circumstances, he entertained a hope that, by a sudden attack, it might be destroyed before the main body of Napoleon's forces could advance to its relief. He therefore ordered one corps to cross the bridge; and finding no serious opposition, he gradually transported the whole of his army over the river, by means of the bridge and three pontoons. The Russian general was completely outwitted; and no sooner had he accomplished this movement, than he discovered his mistake. Heavy columns of French began to emerge from a thick wood in which they had been concealed; their cannon was rapidly advanced into position, and Benningsen found himself unexpectedly in the presence of the great bulk of the grand army. Retreat was impossible; and no alternative remained but to encounter the enemy at a manifest disadvantage. The broken and wooded country which the French occupied, greatly facilitated their operations; while the Russians were so limited in space, and so exposed by their situation, that they had nothing to rely upon but their indomitable courage.

The advanced body of the French, who were under the command of Marshal Lannes, received the approaching Russians with a sharp fire of musketry, mingled with discharges of cannon, and retired skirmish-



ing. It was the 14th of June. "The anniversary of Marengo," observed Napoleon; "it is a lucky day for us." As it would yet take some time to collect all the French troops, some of his lieutenants were of opinion that they ought to defer fighting a decisive battle until the morrow. "No, no," replied the emperor, "one does not catch an enemy twice in such a scrape."

The Russian army had a superior enemy in front, and a deep river, traversed only by four bridges, in its rear. The object of Napoleon was to drive the Russians into the Alle; he therefore directed his attention towards occupying the town of Friedland, and seizing the bridges by which the Russians could effect a retreat. For this dangerous task he selected the corps of Marshal Ney. The emperor, grasping his arm, and pointing to Friedland, the bridges, and the Russians crowded together in front, observed—"Yonder is the goal; march to it without looking about you; break into that thick mass, whatever it costs you; enter Friedland, take the bridges, and give yourself no concern about what may happen on your right, on your left, or in your rear. The army and I shall be there to attend to that." Proud of his commission, Ney departed with so much ardour to execute it, that Napoleon, struck with his martial attitude, exclaimed, "That man is a lion!"

The general engagement between the two armies did not commence until five in the afternoon, and Benningsen entertained the hope that the approach of night would give him the means of retrieving his error by enabling him to regain the right bank of the river. In this he was mistaken; for at that hour the signal for Ney's attack was given by the discharge of twenty pieces of cannon from the French centre. Ney and his corps then marched resolutely direct upon Friedland. On they came (said an elegant writer) with the fury of a tempest, driving before them, like foam before the waves, the Russian chasseurs of the guard, and several regiments of cavalry and Cossacks who were placed in advance, and had endeavoured to check their progress. Some Russian regiments broke and fled towards the river, into which great numbers of the men were precipitated and drowned. But the advancing French were terribly exposed to the enemy's artillery, which played upon them with fearful effect. They had to sustain not only the fire of the batteries before them, but also the fire of those on the right

bank of the Alle, which it was impossible to take, as they were separated from them by the deep bed of the river. Whole files of the French were swept away; and the fire became so severe, that the very bravest of the troops could no longer endure it. At this point the cavalry of the Russian imperial guard charged Ney's column with such impetuosity, that several battalions were thrown into disorder, and driven to the rear, where they stood in groups around their officers. Victory appeared to favour the Russians, who, in their turn, became the assailants. But the Russian guards were not supported, and they were soon encountered by General Dupont, who had hastened to the relief of Ney. The Russian cavalry had scattered in pursuit of the French infantry, and in this state it was fiercely charged in flank by Dupont, and driven back to the edge of the town. The presence of this reinforcement restored the confidence of Ney's soldiers. The latter formed anew, and resumed their march forward. It was necessary to counteract the formidable artillery of the Russians; and Napoleon, therefore, ordered General Victor to collect all the guns of his division, and to range them in mass in front of Ney's troops. This order was executed by the skilful and intrepid General Senarmont, who commanded that artillery. Taking it some hundred paces ahead of the infantry, he daringly placed himself in front of the Russians, and opened upon them a fire, which, from the number of pieces employed and the accuracy of aim with which they were directed, produced terrible effects on the enemy. Directing one of his batteries against the right bank, he soon silenced those erected by the Russians on that side of the river. Then, pushing forward his line of artillery, he gradually approached to within grapeshot range, and firing upon the deep masses crowded together as they fell back into the elbow of the Alle, he made terrible havoc among them. The French infantry continued their advance under cover of the artillery, and the Russians made a despairing effort to extricate themselves from the crowded mass into which they were being driven. Their imperial guard marched, with bayonets fixed, upon Dupont's division, who, in turn, charged them with the bayonet, and hurled them back in confusion. The French then assaulted the town of Friedland, pursued the Russians through the streets, and drove



them upon the bridges of the Alle, which Senarmont's artillery, from without, enfiladed with its shot. The fugitive Russians, in their confusion, themselves actually set fire to the bridges, and thus cut off their own means of retreat. Some of the principal buildings of the town also took fire, and Ney and Dupont met in the burning streets, and congratulated one another on the success of the task which had been assigned to them.\*

The centre and right wing of the Russian army still kept its ground, though subjected to an incessant cannonade which told with terrible effect upon them, on account of the dense masses into which the limited extent of the ground compelled them to form. They had, however, fought with some prospect of success, or at least with undaunted spirit, until the flames arising from Friedland and the bridges, and the vast clouds of smoke which darkened the atmosphere, revealed the sad truth that their retreat was cut off, and filled all hearts with despair. At this point, Napoleon, anxious to take advantage of the brief remainder of the day, carried forward his whole line. Though thus pressed, General Gortschakoff dispatched a column of infantry to the gates of the town, in the hope of retaking it. These at first drove back the soldiers of Ney and Dupont, but were then themselves repulsed. A new combat raged within the unfortunate town, and the possession of it was disputed by the light of the flames by which it was being consumed. The French finally remained masters, and the Russians were driven back into the confined plain from which there was no escape but through the waters of the Alle.

The main body of the Russians, subjected to the onslaught of the masses which Napoleon directed against it, still fought with a wild and despairing bravery. It is difficult to do justice to the obstinate and unyielding courage which influenced these inflexible soldiers. Though raked by the French artillery, which played upon them from half cannon-shot distance, and subjected to a rolling and destructive fire from the French infantry, they were driven back slowly and without disorder. Then, sooner than sur-

render, they crossed the river by fords which, earlier in the day, had been pointed out to them by some peasants. Across these did Benningsen convey the greater part of his artillery; and by them immense numbers of the Russians effected their escape; though great numbers of these unhappy men were washed away and drowned—a fate which their savage and determined energy led them to submit to rather than be made prisoners.

The battle was not concluded until past ten at night; but on this occasion, though the Russians had sustained their defeat with honour, yet the French had an unequivocal victory. The loss of the Russians has been variously estimated at between 17,000 and 25,000 in killed, drowned, wounded, and prisoners. Most of the latter were wounded; not more than 500 of them being unhurt. The French say that they captured eighty pieces of cannon; but other authorities deny that more than a fourth part of that number fell into their hands. The French had lost about 10,000 men in killed and wounded, and two eagles were taken from them. Napoleon slept on the field of battle, surrounded by his soldiers, who, though they had nothing to eat but the bread they brought in their knapsacks, shouted enthusiastically "*Vive l'Empereur!*" Not more than half of Napoleon's cavalry was upon the field; and this circumstance favoured the escape of the Russian army. The night was clear; and, descending the banks of the Alle, the great body of the Russians crossed that river at the bridge of Allenburg. So rapid was their march that, on the following day, they were at Wehlau, on the other side of the Pregel. Though they had nobly sustained their courage in the hour of battle, yet such was the confusion into which they had fallen, and the apprehensions they entertained lest their rear-guard should be attacked, that a general panic took place in consequence of the accidental discharge of a few muskets; and horse, foot, and artillery rushed towards the bridge, trampling each other under foot, and, breaking into the town, spread there the wildest disorder. It is generally admitted, that had Napoleon followed up his success with his usual energy,

\* "Napoleon, placed in the centre of the divisions which he kept in reserve, had never ceased to watch this grand sight. While he was contemplating it attentively, a ball passed at the height of the bayonets, and a soldier, from an instinctive movement, stooped his head. 'If that ball were destined for you,' said Napoleon, smiling, 'though you were to burrow a

hundred feet under ground, it would be sure to find you there.' Thus he wished to give currency to that useful belief, that Fate strikes the brave and the coward without distinction, and that the coward who seeks a hiding-place disgraces himself to no purpose."—Thiers: *Consulate and the Empire*.



the Russian host must have been annihilated. When, on the following day, the French started in pursuit of their enemy, and arrived at the Pregel, they found that all the bridges had been broken down by the retreating Russians.

We mentioned that, before the battle, Napoleon had dispatched Marshal Soult with a body of French troops to the city of Königsberg. It was vigorously defended by the Prussian and Russian troops within, until they learned the result of the battle of Friedland. It was then no longer tenable; therefore, Generals Lestocq and Kamenskoi abandoned it, leaving the immense stores, as well as the sick and the wounded, to the French, to whom the place was immediately afterwards surrendered. Amongst the stores were found quantities of corn and wine; and (so say the French) 100,000 muskets, sent by England, and still on board the vessels which had brought them. Sir Robert Wilson, who was with the Russian army, denies this statement, and affirms it to be "a falsehood of the most extravagant character." England, he says, had sent arms and ammunition, but they did not arrive until they were too late to be of any service.

Lestocq and Kamenskoi, with the allied forces which they led from Königsberg, succeeded in joining the main Russian army on the 18th of June, which crossed the river Niemen by the town of Tilsit, and, after burning the bridge, encamped beyond it.

The emperor Alexander was dispirited, and felt that he was no longer able to continue the war without hazarding the entire ruin of his empire. Disgust at the conduct of England had a considerable share in making him resolve upon seeking a peace with France. His army also cried out loudly for peace; as, though not dissatisfied with its own conduct, it regarded itself as incapable of coping successfully with the superior forces of Napoleon. Russian officers asked, for whom the war was carried on? Was it for the Prussians, who could not defend their own country? or for the English, who, after so frequently announcing succours, sent none, and thought only of conquering colonies? They added, that it was through the paltry ambition of England that brave men were set together by the ears: they had no reason for hate, or even jealousy, as France and Russia had no cause to envy each other. The humiliated king of Prussia suggested to his imperial ally the necessity of making proposals of peace

to Napoleon, and expressed a hope that his friend, who alone had insisted on the prolongation of the war, would defend him in the negotiations better than in the field of battle.

On the 18th, General Benningsen, at the command of Alexander, transmitted to Napoleon a letter, deploring the miseries occasioned by the war, and desiring an armistice as a means of putting an end to them. This letter Napoleon received very favourably, for he was fully aware of the difficulties of his position at such a distance from his capital, from which he had been absent nearly a year. Moreover, he could not depend on the uneasy neutrality of Austria, or the continued indifference of England. Napoleon also fancied he could detect, on the part of Alexander, a disposition which might induce Russia to become his ally against England. He therefore returned an amicable answer, saying, that after so many efforts, fatigues, and victories, he desired nothing but a safe and honourable peace, and that he was ready to consent to an armistice as a means of bringing it about. At the same period, on the 22nd of June, he issued to his victorious soldiers the following proclamation:—Soldiers! on the 5th of June we were attacked in our cantonments by the Russian army. The enemy had mistaken the cause of our inactivity. He perceived, too late, that our repose was that of the lion: he repents of having disturbed it. In the battles of Guttstadt and Heilsburg, and in that ever-memorable one of Friedland—in a campaign of ten days in short, we have taken 120 pieces of cannon, seven colours; killed, wounded, or made prisoners 60,000 Russians; taken from the enemy's army all its magazines, its hospitals, its ambulances, the fortress of Königsberg, the 300 vessels which were in that port, laden with all kinds of military stores; 160,000 muskets which England was sending to arm our enemies. From the banks of the Vistula we have come, with the speed of the eagle, to those of the Niemen. You celebrated at Austerlitz the anniversary of the coronation; this year, you have worthily celebrated that of the battle of Marengo, which put an end to the war of the second coalition. Frenchmen, you have been worthy of yourselves and of me. You will return to France covered with laurels, and after obtaining a glorious peace, which carries with it the guarantee of its duration. It is high time for our country to live in quiet, screened from the malignant influence of



England. My bounties shall prove to you my gratitude, and the full extent of the love that I feel for you."

A friendly intercourse was soon established between the officers and men of the French and Russian armies; the former being encamped on the left bank of the Niemen; those of the latter about a mile distant from the right bank. They had too vivid an experience of each other's valour not to be inspired with sentiments of mutual respect. Alexander also dispatched Prince Labanoff to the French camp, to desire a personal interview with Napoleon. The Russian noble expressed the strong desire felt by his master to put an end to the war, his excessive disgust for the English alliance, and his extreme impatience to see the great man of the age, and to come to a frank and cordial explanation with him. Napoleon, who was dexterous in the use of an adroit and delicate flattery, replied, that he desired nothing better than to meet the young sovereign of whom he had heard so much, and whose understanding, grace, and fascinating qualities were so highly extolled. He therefore appointed the following day, the 25th, for the interview.

The meeting of the two emperors took place on a large raft moored in the middle of the Niemen, equidistant from, and within sight of, both banks of the river. On the raft a wooden pavilion was erected, surmounted by the eagles of France and Russia, and decorated with as much magnificence as time and circumstances would permit. This was for the reception of the emperors alone; and, at a little distance, another raft, with a building of less sumptuous construction, was stationed for their respective suites. Each bank of the river was covered with the imperial guard of the two monarchs, drawn up in single lines. At one o'clock the thunder of artillery made known that the emperors had entered their respective boats to proceed to the raft. Alexander was accompanied by the Grand-duke Constantine, General Benningsen, Prince Labanoff, General Ouvaroff, and Count Lieven; Napoleon by Murat, then Grand-duke of Berg; Marshals Berthier, Bessières, and Duroc; and Caulaincourt, the grand-equerrey. The boat of Napoleon cleared the distance first; and the emperor, stepping on the raft, passed over and received Alexander on the opposite side. The monarchs instantly embraced each other, amidst the shouts of the soldiers, many of whom, especially the simple Rus-

sians, seeing this act of courtesy between their masters, at once imagined that peace was concluded.

"Why are we at war?" mutually inquired the emperors. In fact, Napoleon was contending with Russia chiefly as an ally of England; and Russia though naturally uneasy about the domination of France, was serving the interests of England much more than her own, in persevering in the struggle with such animosity. Alexander then revealed how deeply he had been wounded by the conduct and parsimony of the British government. "I hate the English," said he, "as much as you do; and am ready to second you in whatever you take in hand against them." "In that case" answered Napoleon, "everything can be easily settled, and peace is already made." The interview lasted two hours; but it is necessarily very difficult to ascertain precisely what passed between the two potentates during that period. Many conversations have been invented and imposed upon Europe as authentic history; but they obtained but a passing credit, and need not be referred to here. M. Thiers had peculiar means of ascertaining the substance of this important conversation: we shall therefore quote his generalisation of it.\* "Napoleon, seeking to discover what were the sentiments of the speaker which he ought to flatter, soon perceived that two were then predominant. In the first place, deep spleen against allies—burdensome like Prussia, or selfish like England; and in the next, a very sensitive and deeply-mortified pride. He took pains, therefore, to prove to Alexander, that he had been duped by his allies; that, moreover, he had conducted himself with nobleness and courage. He strove to persuade him that Russia was wrong to persist in patronising ungrateful and jealous neighbours like the Germans, or in serving the interests of greedy traders like the English. He attributed this mistake to generous sentiments carried to excess—to misconceptions to which ministers, incompetent or bribed, had given rise. He extolled the bravery of the Russian soldiers, and told the emperor Alexander that, if they were to unite the two armies which had fought so valiantly against one another at Austerlitz, at Eylau, at Friedland, but which in those battles had both behaved like real giants fighting blindfold, *they might divide the world between them, for its own peace and welfare.* He then insinuated, but

\* *Consulate and the Empire.*



very cautiously, that, by waging war with France, Russia was spending her strength without any possible compensation; whereas, if she would unite with France in subjecting the west and east, on land and on sea, she would gain as much glory, and certainly more profit. Without explaining himself further, he seemed to take it upon him to make the fortune of his young antagonist much more satisfactorily than they who had led him into a career in which he had hitherto met with nothing but defeats. Alexander, it is true, was under engagements to Prussia; and it was requisite that his honour should get out of that situation unstained. The emperor, therefore, gave him to understand that he would restore to him so much of the Prussian states as would be required to release him honourably from his engagements to his allies, after which the Russian cabinet would be at liberty to follow a new policy—the only true, the only profitable policy, resembling in all respects that of the great Catherine.

“This conversation, which had touched upon all questions without investigating them thoroughly, had deeply moved Alexander. Napoleon had opened to him new prospects, which is always a pleasing thing to a fickle, and especially to a discontented, mind. Besides, more than once, Alexander, amidst his defeats, feeling keenly the inconveniences of that furious war into which he had been led against France, and the advantages of a system of union with her, had said to himself something like what Napoleon had just been saying to him, but not with that clearness, that force, and above all, that seduction of a conqueror who presents himself to the conquered with hands full of presents, with mouth full of caressing words. Alexander was fascinated; Napoleon clearly perceived it, and promised himself soon to render the seduction complete.

“After flattering the monarch, he resolved to flatter the man. ‘You and I,’ said he, ‘shall understand each other better, if we treat directly, than by employing our ministers, who frequently deceive or misunderstand us, and we shall advance business more in an hour than our negotiators in several days. Between you and me,’ he added, ‘there must be no third person.’ It was impossible to flatter Alexander in a more sensible manner, than by attributing to him a superiority over those around him, similar to that which Napoleon had a right

to attribute to himself over all his servants. In consequence, Napoleon proposed to him to leave the hamlet where he was living, and establish himself in the little town of Tilsit, which should be neutralised to receive him, and where they might treat of business themselves, in person, at any hour. This proposal was eagerly accepted; and it was agreed that M. de Labanoff should go that day to Tilsit to make the necessary arrangements. They had still to talk of that unfortunate king of Prussia, who was at Alexander’s head-quarters, awaiting what should be done with him and his kingdom. Alexander offered to bring him to that same raft on the Niemen to introduce him to Napoleon, who should address a few soothing words to him. It was necessary, in fact, that Alexander, before he passed from one system of politics to another, should, if he meant not to dishonour himself, have saved some portion of the crown of his ally. Napoleon, who had already taken his determination upon this point, and who was well aware that he must grant certain concessions to save the honour of Alexander, consented to receive the king of Prussia on the following day. The two sovereigns then left the pavilion, and, passing from serious affairs to testimonies of courtesy, complimented the persons of their respective suites. Napoleon treated the Grand-duke Constantine and General Benningsen in a flattering manner. Alexander congratulated Murat and Berthier on being the worthy lieutenants of the greatest captain of modern times. Parting with fresh demonstrations of friendship, the two emperors again embarked, amidst the applause of the numerous spectators assembled on the banks of the Niemen.”

In accordance with the proposal of Napoleon, Alexander and his suite took up their abode in the town of Tilsit. Every possible attention was paid to the czar. The furniture in his rooms was all sent from the French head-quarters; and a sumptuous train of cooks and other attendants was in readiness to make him forget the luxuries of St. Petersburg. Not having his household with him, it was settled that he should take all his meals with the emperor Napoleon. They passed the evening together, and conversed for a long time in a confidential manner, with a familiarity at once dignified and graceful. On the next day, Alexander brought the humiliated king of Prussia into the presence of Napoleon.



The latter treated Frederic William with coldness, and the Prussian was reserved, stiff, and melancholy. The interview was short; and at its conclusion, it was decided that the latter should come also to Tilsit to reside with his ally Alexander. On the 27th, the two emperors reviewed the French imperial guard. These old soldiers, successively of the Revolution, the Republic, and the Empire, showed themselves with pride to the sovereign whom they had defeated. They did not display the lofty stature, the regular and measured march of the soldiers of the north; but they exhibited that freedom of movement, that assurance of attitude, and that intelligence of look, which accounted for their victories and their superiority over all the armies of Europe. Alexander complimented them highly. They responded with repeated shouts of "*Vive Alexandre! Vive Napoleon!*" Napoleon also was much struck with the military aspect of the Russian guard. The docility with which the men submitted to their orders, impressed him as being particularly admirable. "My soldiers," he remarked, "are as brave as it is possible to be, but they are too much addicted to reasoning on their position. If they had the impassible firmness and docility of the Russians, the world would be too small for their exploits. The French soldiers are too much attached to their country to play the part of the Macedonians."

The ascendancy which the French emperor acquired over the mind of his late antagonist, was, especially when the subtle character of the latter is considered, a remarkable triumph of intellect. Alexander eagerly embraced the general views of Napoleon, and never left him without expressing his unbounded admiration. "What a great man!" he said incessantly to those who approached him; "what a genius—what extensive views—what a captain—what a statesman! Had I but known him sooner, how many faults he might have spared me! What great things we might have accomplished together!" As might be supposed, the miserable Frederic William was excluded from all this familiarity and confidence. Napoleon treated him with deserved neglect, while he showered the most delicate attentions upon Alexander. A superb dressing-case of gold, used by Napoleon, having appeared to please him, was instantly offered and accepted.

The two armies shared the familiarity of

the emperors. The Russians did not regard themselves as vanquished; and, notwithstanding their misfortunes, even felt much of the exultation of victory. Proud, it has been observed, of having so long arrested the progress of the conqueror of the world, glorying even in the amount of their losses and the chasms in their ranks, which told the desperate strife in which they had been engaged, they mingled with their recent enemies with feelings unlacerated by the humiliations of defeat. Great cordiality, therefore, soon prevailed, and hospitalities were frequently exchanged. The officers of the two imperial guards, and especially Prince Murat and the Grand-duke Constantine, were remarkably cordial and complimentary to each other. "On one of these occasions, to such a length did the effusions of mutual respect and regard proceed, that the officers of the two guards, amidst the fumes of wine, and the enthusiasm of the moment, mutually exchanged their uniforms; French hearts beat under the decorations won amidst the snows of Eylau, and Russian bosoms warmed beneath the orders bestowed on the field of Austerlitz. Last and most singular effect of civilised life and military discipline, to strengthen at once the fierceness of national passions, and the bonds by which they are to be restrained, and join in fraternal brotherhood, one day, those hands which, on another, had been dyed by mutual slaughter, or lifted up in relentless hostility against each other."\*

The conferences between the two emperors extended over a period of twenty days; and after a fortnight spent in conference, the treaty of Tilsit was formally signed and made public. The treaty between France and Russia was signed on the 7th of July; and a separate one between France and Prussia on the 9th. Alexander, in the November of 1806, had written to Frederic William—"I will do my utmost to prevent the Prussian dominions from losing even a village." Even during the time spent at Tilsit, the czar had represented to his brother monarch, that his intimacy with Napoleon would be the means of obtaining larger restitutions in favour of Prussia. Yet this imperial actor, who used a pretended benevolence as an instrument to deceive his people and his friends, shutting out a recollection of the oath he had sworn at midnight over the tomb of Frederic the Great,

\* Alison's *History of Europe*.



not only consented that Prussia should be deprived of about half its territory and population by France, but actually, to the astonishment of the world, himself took possession of Bialystock, one of its ill-gained Polish provinces.\*

Alexander would probably have assisted Frederic William if the effort had cost him nothing; but for a useless ally, he would not cross the decisions of Napoleon. Prussia was stripped of all those provinces which, prior to the first partition in 1772, had formed part of the kingdom of Poland. These were to be erected into a separate principality, to be called the Grand Duchy of Warsaw; and, except Bialystock, to be bestowed on the king of Saxony; to whom, also, was granted a right to a free military road across the Prussian states, to connect his German with his Polish dominions. For the rest, Prussia was so dismembered and curtailed, that its population was reduced from nine millions and a-half of inhabitants to five millions; and its revenue from 120 millions of francs to sixty-nine millions. At one blow, it was cast down from the rank of one of the great monarchies of Europe, to that of a third power; even the territory that was left to it was completely exhausted. Such a sudden downfall taught Frederic William that he had laboured under a fatal mistake; that his glory was that of his ancestors, and his power a phantom. Dantzic was declared an independent city, under the protection of the kings of Prussia and Saxony; which, in effect, rendered it a frontier town of France. Prussia and Russia recognised the confederation of the Rhine; and a new kingdom, to be called the kingdom of Westphalia, was erected in favour of Jerome Buonaparte, the emperor's brother; composed of the provinces ceded by Prussia on the left bank of the Elbe. Napoleon's other brothers, Joseph and Louis, were also recognised as kings of Naples and Holland. France and Russia guaranteed the integrity of each other's dominions, and mutually restored all prisoners. Russia undertook to mediate with

England for a peace with France; and France with Turkey, for a peace with Russia;† and each power undertook, in case its mediation was refused, to make common cause with the other. Russia engaged to assist France against England with all its forces, both by sea and land, if the latter refused her mediation; or, "if having accepted it, peace was not concluded by the 1st of November, on terms stipulating that the flags of every power should enjoy a perfect and entire equality on every sea, and that all the conquests made of French possessions since 1805, should be restored; in that case, also, Russia shall demand a categorical answer by the 1st of December, and the Russian ambassador shall receive a conditional order to quit London." Then, in the event of the English government not making a satisfactory answer to the Russian requisitions, "France and Russia shall jointly summon the three courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon, to close their harbours against English vessels, recall their ambassadors from London, and declare war against Great Britain." The king of Prussia also consented to close all his harbours to the ships and commerce of England, and to permit the fortresses left him to remain in the hands of France, as a security for the payment of the war contributions to be levied on the unfortunate inhabitants.

Another and a *secret* treaty was entered into at Tilsit by the two emperors; and in this an attempt was made to carry out the idea of Napoleon, and divide the civilised world between them. This topic was the one discussed in the long conversations which had taken place between the two monarchs. Fortunately, there was one point on which harmony did not exist between them. This was the probable partition of the Turkish empire in the event of its dissolution—an event then speedily expected by the generality of politicians. In the discussion of the emperors on the subject, it was arranged that Russia was to have the banks of the Danube as far as the Balkan

\* Alison, who endeavours, with a perverse ingenuity, to represent Alexander as both a great and good man, thus mildly refers to this treachery on the part of the czar:—"The province of Bialystock, containing 200,000 souls, was ceded to Russia, which thus participated, in the hour of misfortune, in a share, *small indeed*, but still a share, of the spoils of its ally." Surely Sir Archibald must perceive, that it was not the amount of this political theft that made Europe cry out shame on Alexander, but

the peculiar circumstances of duplicity and treachery with which it was associated. The wavering king of Prussia had been lured into the war by the czar, who, after promising that he would exert himself to the utmost in his favour to prevent his losing even a village, then concludes by robbing him of a province!

† The particulars of the war which Russia had been carrying on against Turkey, will be narrated in the next chapter.



mountains; Napoleon the maritime provinces, such as Albania and the Morea; while Bosnia, Servia, and the inland provinces were allotted to Austria. The sultan was to be permitted to retain the country south of the Balkans; that is, Constantinople, Asia Minor, and Egypt. Alexander objected to an arrangement by which Constantinople was to be left in the possession of the barbarians of Asia, and suggested a different partition, by which Russia was to have that city, universally regarded as the real capital of the East; while France seized the islands of the Archipelago, Candia, Syria, and Egypt. To this Napoleon would not consent: to give up Constantinople, and thus let Russia make the most brilliant acquisition it was possible to imagine, would not suit his views. He could permit the torrent of Russian ambition to dash itself against the foot of the Balkans; but he would not permit it to pass those tutelary mountains. He would not suffer the most striking achievement of modern times to be accomplished by any one but himself. He was too jealous of the greatness of France, and too desirous of alone filling the imagination of mankind, to consent to such an encroachment on his own glory. One day the two emperors, on returning from a long ride, shut themselves up in the writing cabinet, where numerous maps were spread out. Napoleon, apparently continuing a conversation briskly begun with Alexander, desired M. de Meneval to bring him the map of Turkey; then, unfolding it, he resumed the conversation, and suddenly clapping his finger on Constantinople, exclaimed several times, regardless of being heard by his secretary, in whom he had absolute confidence—"Constantinople! Constantinople! never! 'tis the empire of the world!" Alexander, however, was mollified by the concession of Finland; as, if he was able to obtain this extensive territory, the acquisition would add a lustre to his reign. "You will take Finland," said Napoleon to him, "as a compensation for the expenses of the war. The king of Sweden, it is true, is your brother-in-law and your ally; but that is only an additional reason why he

should conform to your policy: if he does not, let him take the consequences of his ill-will. Sweden may be a relation, an ally of the moment; but, geographically, she is your enemy. St. Petersburg is too near the frontiers of Finland. It will not do to let your fair Russian beauties again hear from their palaces the cannon of the Swedes."

When the two potentates had agreed as to the substance of the secret treaty, it was drawn up by Napoleon with his own hand. The articles which composed it, though strongly conjectured from various subsequent events, and even partially disclosed, were not fully known until 1834, when they were published in the *Biographie Universelle*; the high character of which guarantees the authenticity of the information. The articles were, in substance, as follows:—1. Russia was to take possession of European Turkey, and to extend its conquests in Asia to what extent it thought proper.\* 2. The house of Bourbon in Spain, and the house of Braganza in Portugal, were to cease to reign, and a prince of the house of Napoleon was to succeed to each. 3. The temporal authority of the pope was to cease, and Rome and its dependencies to be united to the kingdom of Italy. 4. Russia was to assist France with her navy for the conquest of Gibraltar. 5. The French were to take possession of Algiers, Tunis, and other towns in Africa; and, at a general peace, these conquests were to be given as an indemnity to the kings of Sicily and Sardinia. 6. Malta was to belong to the French, and no peace was to be made with England before its cession. 7. The French were to occupy Egypt. 8. The navigation of the Mediterranean was to be permitted to French, Russian, Italian, and Spanish vessels only; all other nations were to be rigidly excluded. 9. Denmark was to be indemnified in the north of Germany with the Hanseatic towns, *but only on condition of placing its navy in the hands of France*. 10. Their majesties, the emperors of Russia and of the French, were to settle an agreement by which no power should be allowed to send merchant ships to sea, un-

\* But with the exceptions already referred to. The clause on this subject was in the following terms:—"In like manner, if in consequence of the changes which have recently taken place in the government of Constantinople, the Porte shall decline the intervention of France; or in case, having accepted it, the negotiations shall not have led to a satisfactory

adjustment in the space of three months, France will make common cause with Russia against the Ottoman Porte, and the two high contracting parties will unite their efforts to wrest from the vexatious and oppressive government of the Turks all its provinces in Europe; Roumelia and Constantinople alone excepted."



less it possessed a certain number of vessels of war.

The day after the signature of the treaties, the two emperors parted with much ceremony and appearance of friendship. Napoleon, wearing the grand cordon of St. Andrew, went to the house occupied by Alexander, who received him decorated with the grand cordon of the Legion of Honour. Having exchanged the ratifications, the two monarchs mounted their horses and showed themselves to their troops. Napoleon desired, that the soldier reputed to be the bravest of the Russian imperial guard should be ordered to step out of the ranks; and on his doing so, conferred on him the cross of the Legion of Honour. The French emperor then accompanied his august friend to the bank of the Niemen, where, after embracing amidst the applause of the spectators, they separated.

There is perhaps no instance in history of such a sudden change in the councils, and apparently even in the personal sentiments of a great sovereign, as took place in those of Alexander at Tilsit. The memorable treaty made at that town, is an era not only in Russian, but also in European history. It has been quaintly observed, that it converted Alexander into the enemy of all his allies, and the ally of his enemies. It was, in fact, fraught with evil consequences to both the potentates whose ambition had prompted them to a dark and wicked league against the liberties of the world. Happily for mankind, there

are certain unalterable principles ever in action throughout nature, which are not to be influenced by human might, or dazzled by its magnificence. Like the tides of the ocean, they roll on for ever, unconscious or regardless of the leagues of monarchs and the decrees of despots: this fact both Napoleon and Alexander lost sight of, but each of them had it subsequently painfully forced upon his unwilling recognition. The treaty of Tilsit, advantageous and honourable to Napoleon as it appeared to be, has been considered by many distinguished politicians as the first cause of his ruin. He had made irreconcilable enemies, incongruous and doubtful friends, and raised an immense political edifice, in which everything was new, and which was run up so rapidly, that the foundation had not time to settle, or the mortar to harden. The entire alienation of Prussia, which it accomplished, is regarded as one of the greatest errors ever committed by Napoleon. Poland also was disappointed and deeply aggrieved, and the hopes its people entertained of the restoration of their nationality by the French emperor, cruelly blighted. Towards Turkey also, Napoleon, in consenting to her dismemberment, had behaved with a most unblushing perfidy, as we shall show in our narrative of the recent affairs of that country in connection with Russia.\* The military transactions which preceded the peace of Tilsit, gained France unbounded glory by their brilliancy; but the political arrangements made by it have been universally condemned. "In war," observes M. Thiers,

\* Sir A. Alison has some strikingly judicious remarks on the subject, which we shall take the liberty of quoting. He says—"The perfidious conduct of Napoleon towards Turkey has been almost overlooked by the liberal writers of Europe, in the vehemence of their indignation at him for not re-establishing the kingdom of Poland. Without doubt, if that great act of injustice could have been repaired by his victorious arm, and a compact, powerful empire of sixteen millions of persons re-established on the banks of the Vistula, it would have been alike grateful to every lover of freedom, and important as forming a barrier against Muscovite aggrandisement in Europe. But was it possible to construct such an empire, to form such a barrier, out of the disjointed elements of Polish anarchy? That is the point for consideration; and if it was not, then the French emperor would have thrown away all the advantages of victory, if, for a visionary and impracticable scheme of this description, he had incurred the lasting and indelible animosity of the partitioning powers. With the aid of 200,000 brave men, indeed, which Poland could with ease have sent into the field, he might, for a season, have withstood the united armies of Russia, Austria, and Prussia; but

could he rely on their tumultuous assemblies sustaining the steady and durable efforts requisite for permanent success? What made Poland originally fall a victim to the coalesced powers, once little more than provinces of its mighty dominions? 'The insane ambition,' as John Sobieski said, 'of a plebeian noblesse;' the jealousy of a hundred thousand electors, incapable alike of governing themselves or of permitting the steady national government of others. Was this fatal element of discord eradicated from the Polish heart? Is it yet eradicated? Was it possible, by re-establishing Poland in 1807, to have done anything but, as Talleyrand well expressed it, 'organised anarchy?' These are the considerations which then presented, and still present, an invincible obstacle to a measure, in other points of view recommended by so many considerations of justice and expedience. It is evident that the passions of the people, their insane desire for democratic equality, were so powerful, that, if re-established in its full original extent, Poland would speedily have again fallen under the dominion of its former conquerors; the same causes which formerly proved fatal to its independence, would, without doubt, again have had the same effect."



"Napoleon was guided by his genius; in politics, by his passions." He desired, by the aid of Russia, to conquer England; satisfied of his power of eventually overthrowing the government of the northern empire, if its too active ambition interfered with his own projects. As to Alexander, he was lured forward, fascinated, and awed by the commanding genius of his late antagonist; and influenced also by the ambitious and dishonest desire of extending his sceptre over Finland and the greater part,

if not the whole, of European Turkey. Still he felt much uneasiness at the strange alliance he had made, the projects to the execution of which he had bound himself, and the yet hidden results to which they might lead. "Sire," said one of his counsellors to him at Tilsit, "I take the liberty of reminding you of the fate of your father, as the consequence of the French alliance." "Oh God!" replied Alexander, "I know it; I see it; but how can I withstand the destiny which directs me."

## CHAPTER XLVII.

THE TURKISH CABINET CONGRATULATE NAPOLEON, AND CONSENT TO RECEIVE AN AMBASSADOR FROM FRANCE; GENERAL SEBASTIANI APPOINTED; HE PERSUADES THE PORTE TO DISPLACE THE HOSPODARS OF MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA, NOTWITHSTANDING A TREATY WITH RUSSIA BINDING THE SULTAN NOT TO DO SO WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THAT POWER; EXPOSTULATION OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND, AND RESTORATION OF THE HOSPODARS; A RUSSIAN ARMY ENTERS MOLDAVIA; TURKEY DECLARES WAR AGAINST RUSSIA; THE RUSSIAN TROOPS TAKE POSSESSION OF WALLACHIA ALSO; ALEXANDER, PRESSED BY THE ARMS OF FRANCE, APPLIES TO ENGLAND FOR ASSISTANCE AGAINST THE TURKS; AN ENGLISH FLEET THREATENS CONSTANTINOPLE, BUT IS COMPELLED TO RETIRE, AND THE PORTE DECLARES WAR AGAINST ENGLAND; NAVAL DEFEAT OF THE TURKS BY THE RUSSIANS; AN ARMISTICE IS ARRANGED AT TILSIT BETWEEN ALEXANDER AND THE SULTAN; TREACHERY OF NAPOLEON TOWARDS TURKEY; WAR WITH PERSIA.

WHILE Russia was vainly employed in attempting to overthrow the power of Napoleon, she was also carrying on a contest with Persia and with Turkey. In comparison with the great events in which Russia was engaged in the west of Europe, these wars sink into comparative insignificance, and a narrative of them appears to lack the vital interest attaching to the former. Yet they are links in the great chain of historical sequence; and the war with Turkey by no means an unimportant one.

By a convention between Russia and Turkey, in 1802, it was arranged, that the hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, when once appointed by the Porte, should remain in office for seven years, and should not, on any account, be removed from their governments before the expiration of that term, without the concurrence of the Russian minister at Constantinople. That such a stipulation was derogatory from the sovereignty claimed and exercised for ages by the sultan in these provinces, cannot be denied. But the terms of the convention were clear and precise; and when con-

cluded and ratified, any contravention of its articles by one of the contracting parties, without the consent of the other, could not but be regarded as a breach of treaty, affording to the other party a just ground of complaint, and, on refusal of redress, a justifiable cause of war. The convention might have been originally improvident on the part of the Turks, as being incompatible with the dignity, and inconsistent with the interests, of their empire; but when concluded, they were bound to abide by it, and had no right to abrogate or set it aside without the consent of Russia.

Such was the state of affairs when the Ottoman government, alarmed at the progress of the French power, deemed it prudent to send a special embassy to Paris, to congratulate Napoleon on his assumption of the imperial dignity; and, contrary to its former determination, consented to receive an ambassador from France. General Sebastiani, a military officer, whose subtle mind had been nurtured in a cloister and matured in a camp, was selected by Napoleon to proceed to Constantinople in that capacity. As the emperor was aware that



war was impending between Russia and France, he directed Sebastiani to do all in his power to persuade Turkey to break her alliance with Russia and England, to produce hostilities between her and her northern neighbour, and to induce her to revert to her ancient connection with France.

On the arrival of General Sebastiani at Constantinople, he laid before the divan the treaty between France and Russia, recently signed at Paris by M. D'Oubril; and contending that an article of that treaty, which guaranteed, in general terms, the integrity and independence of the Turkish empire, amounted to a virtual repeal of the convention concerning the hospodars, succeeded in persuading the Porte to recall them, and appoint others in their places, without consulting the Russian ambassador, or regarding his formal protest against the measure. Having carried this point against the Russians, while it was still uncertain whether D'Oubril's treaty would be ratified by the court of St. Petersburg, the French ambassador, as soon as he understood that the ratification of that treaty had been withheld, presented a note to the Ottoman government, in which he demanded that the passage of the Bosphorus should be shut against all Russian ships of war, as well as against every other vessel of that nation bringing troops, ammunition, or provisions; though he knew, that by treaty between Russia and the Porte, that passage was open to the vessels of the former without limitation. Yet Sebastiani not only assured the Turks of the friendship and protection of his master in case of their compliance, but threatened them with a declaration of war on the part of the French emperor if they did not accede to his demands.

The Porte, instead of resenting these insolent proposals, evinced a disposition to comply with them. It, however, first communicated them to the English and Russian ambassadors at Constantinople, to obtain their advice in so critical an aspect of affairs. Both of them remonstrated in the strongest manner against the conduct of the Porte. M. Italinski, the Russian ambassador, threatened instantly to leave Constantinople, unless the dismissed hospodars were reinstated in their dignities. The English ambassador also peremptorily announced to the divan, that if the demands of Russia were not instantly acceded to, a British fleet would enter the Dardanelles

and lay the capital in ashes. Sensible of his weakness, and of the exposed position of Constantinople, the sultan complied with the demands of the allied powers, and caused the hospodars to be reinstated in their governments. At the same time, Selim secretly informed the French ambassador that he had only yielded to the storm until he was in a condition to brave it, and that both his policy and inclination united him with the emperor Napoleon.

The cause of war between Russia and Turkey appeared now to be removed, when, on the 23rd of November, 1806, a Russian army, amounting to 50,000 men, under the command of General Nicholson, entered Moldavia, drove the Turks before them, and took possession of Chotzim, Bender, and Jassy. It is asserted, that the orders for this proceeding were given before the submission of the sultan, and that the latter was not known at St. Petersburg until it was too late to prevent the invasion of his dominions. There is no reason to believe this statement; as the Russians continued their occupation, notwithstanding the restoration of the hospodars. We accept the explanation of the conduct of the Russians, given by M. Thiers, who observes—"That invincible attraction which draws them to Constantinople, had silenced in them all the considerations of prudence. It was, in truth, an egregious blunder, when they had the French army upon their hands, and scarcely 200,000 men to oppose to it, to employ 50,000 of that number against the Turks. But amidst the convulsions of this age, the idea of seizing any occasion to take what they pleased, was then the predominant idea of all governments. The Russians, therefore, said to themselves, that the time was perhaps come for them to take possession of Moldavia and Wallachia."

When information of the invasion of Moldavia reached Constantinople, that city was filled with indignation and surprise. A cry for war was loud and universal, especially among the ulemahs and the Janissaries, whose religious fanaticism, and general hatred of Europeans, were stung into fury by the perfidy of the Russians; the objects alike of their superstitious dread and their deeply-rooted aversion. The Russian ambassador narrowly escaped the fury of the mob, and also of being immured in the fortress of the Seven Towers; but the sultan permitted him to leave Constantinople in



the English frigate *Canopus*. The following day, December 30th, 1806, the Porte published a formal declaration of war against Russia; and great preparations were made, both by sea and land, to carry it out with vigour.

In the meantime, the Russians having completed the conquest of Moldavia, entered Wallachia; and, after defeating a body of Turkish troops, took possession, without resistance, of Bucharest, the capital of that province, from whence they sent detachments in all directions. At the close of the year they were masters of the three provinces of Bessarabia, Moldavia, and Wallachia, and threatened to cross the Danube and assist the Servians, then in revolt against the Porte. The very rapidity of these successes, however, perplexed the emperor Alexander and his ministers. Russia was in serious danger from the arms of France on the banks of the Vistula. There it was, in fact, that the fate of Turkey was to be decided; for had the Russians triumphed over the French, it is more than probable that the Ottoman empire in Europe would have been seized upon by the czar. Alexander, anxious to draw off the Turks, whom he had prematurely aroused, applied to England to permit a naval force, then cruising in the *Ægean* Sea, to make a demonstration against Constantinople, with the object of intimidating the Porte into an abandonment of hostilities with Russia, and the acceptance of terms of peace. The English ministry consented; and Sir Thomas Duckworth was sent, with a fleet of seven ships of the line, besides frigates and bomb-ships, to force the passage of the Dardanelles, and, if certain terms should not be acceded to by the Porte, to bombard Constantinople.

When Mr. Arbuthnot, the English ambassador at Constantinople, learned that Sir John Duckworth had arrived off Tenedos, he delivered the English *ultimatum* to the divan; which was, the immediate dismissal of the French ambassador, the accession of Turkey to the alliance of Russia and England, and the opening of the Dardanelles to the vessels of Russia. These demands were peremptorily refused, and Mr. Arbuthnot considered it prudent to withdraw from Constantinople, and take refuge in the *Endymion* frigate, then lying off Seraglio Point. The Porte resented the insulting interference of England by immediately declaring war against it.

The British fleet, therefore, passed the Dardanelles on the morning of the 19th of February, 1807. The batteries had been suffered to fall into a state of comparative decay: the Turks were taken by surprise, and little resistance was made, with the exception of a tremendous cannonade from the batteries of the castles of Europe and Asia. After a time this was silenced by the rapid and well-directed fire of the British vessels, and a small Turkish squadron burnt or dispersed. Great alarm prevailed at Constantinople when the English squadron anchored at no great distance from the city. The divan at first resolved on submission; but in consequence of the spirited representations of General Sebastiani, the French ambassador, they resolved to gain time by negotiation, and prepare for a vigorous defence. The English admiral allowed himself to be deceived into suffering time to be consumed in the exchange of notes and diplomatic communications, during which almost the entire population of Constantinople laboured day and night at the fortifications, under the able direction of Sebastiani, and assisted by a body of French engineers. At the expiration of a week, more than a thousand pieces of cannon were mounted on the batteries, the naval arsenal was furnished with immense resources, the defences of the harbour were strengthened, and the whole line of coast presented a formidable aspect. A hundred gun-boats were drawn across the mouth of the Golden Horn; while twelve Turkish line-of-battle ships, and nine frigates, lay in the canal with their sails bent, and ready for action. Great quantities of fire-ships were prepared to act against the fleet of the invaders; red-hot shot was kept constantly heated, in case of the approach of the British ships; and 200,000 men, destined to march against the Russians, were said to be in the city and suburbs, prepared to repel the English if they were enabled to effect a landing.

When the English admiral had suffered a week to elapse, Constantinople and the neighbouring coasts were so efficiently armed, that the contemplated attack upon it became entirely hopeless. Some doubts were even entertained, in consequence of the prevalence of an adverse wind, whether the English fleet would be able to retire and repass the Dardanelles at all; in which case, capture or total destruction were the only alternatives open to it. Sir John Duckworth, therefore, renounced the peri-









*View of the Bay of Naples from the Villa of Pausanias*



lous enterprise which had been so rashly and unjustly undertaken; and on the 1st of March the British fleet repassed the straits of the Dardanelles in a very crest-fallen condition, and through a succession of firing from the batteries on either side. Such was the calibre of the Turkish guns, that balls or blocks of marble, of immense weight and size, were fired at our ships, which they threatened to sink with a single blow. One of these projectiles, weighing 800 pounds, cut the mainmast of the *Windsor* man-of-war in two, and it was not without much trouble and difficulty that the ship was saved. Another gigantic ball penetrated the poop of the *Standard*, and killed or wounded sixty men. At length the British fleet cleared the straits, and regained their old station at Tenedos, after having sustained a loss of 250 men.—Thus terminated this much-talked-of expedition to the Hellespont and the Bosphorus. It had broken the spell by which, for many ages, the passage of the Dardanelles had been guarded: still, the result of the whole was little more than a brilliant bravado, followed by a series of blunders terminating in disgrace. Some efforts were made, in the House of Commons, towards calling Sir John Duckworth to account; but he was protected by the ministry, and the affair passed off without investigation.

This unfortunate demonstration against Constantinople produced an effect exactly the reverse of what was intended. It co-operated with the address of Sebastiani, to bring the Turkish government, for a time, wholly under the influence of France, and eventually, under that influence, to make peace with Russia when Russia had declared herself against England.

The English fleet was joined at Tenedos by a Russian squadron of ten sail-of-the-line and a number of frigates, under the command of Admiral Siniavin. The allied naval forces, after taking possession of Lemnos and Tenedos, for the service of their fleets, established a blockade of the entrance to the straits; but the English fleet soon departed for Egypt, and left the blockade to be maintained by the Russians. As a similar manœuvre was adopted at the mouth of the Bosphorus, by a Russian squadron which came down from the Black Sea, Constantinople was cut off from some of its usual and most productive sources of supplies, and in a short time a great dearth of provisions was experienced. Seid Ali, the

Turkish grand-admiral, was therefore dispatched with a fleet to disperse the Russians and break up the blockade. Though the Turks had a far inferior force to that opposed to them, yet they gave battle to the Russians on the 1st of July, 1807, near the isle of Tenedos. The contest was prolonged for seven hours, and carried on with great obstinacy on both sides. Four of the Turkish ships were carried by the wind out of the line of battle, and the unskilful crews were unable, or unwilling, to bring them again under fire. Seid Ali, who at one period of the action was surrounded by five Russian vessels, fought his ship with admirable bravery and skill; and, though wounded in the action, made his way through them. But the contest, after the accidental separation of the four ships, was altogether unequal. Four ships of the line were taken; three others were burned, and the rest driven for shelter under the cannon of the Dardanelles: above 1,000 Turks also perished during the battle—a great number in comparison with what usually takes place in engagements at sea. Intoxicated by this victory, the Russians became very overbearing in their attitude at sea towards the Turks. The land campaign on the banks of the Danube, though not productive of any decisive results, was yet in some degree favourable to the Russians, who held their position in the principalities. On the Asiatic frontiers of the two empires the Russians were more successful; and during the month of June, the seraskier of Erzeroum suffered a total defeat at the hands of General Gudovitch. This victory was the more important from the fact, that it prevented the Persians from making a bold diversion in favour of the Turks. The latter were somewhat relieved from the pressure of these hostile proceedings by the treaty of Tilsit, which led to an armistice between Russia and the Porte. This was concluded at Slobosia on the 24th of August, and was to continue until the 3rd of April in the following year. As the base of the truce, it was agreed that the Russian troops should retire from Moldavia and Wallachia, but that these provinces should not be occupied by the troops of the sultan until ratifications were exchanged of a definitive treaty of peace between Russia and the Ottoman Porte, which was to be concluded, under the mediation of the emperor Napoleon, on terms honourable to both empires.

Before the conclusion of the treaty of



Tilsit a revolution had taken place at Constantinople, and been followed by the dethronement of Sultan Selim and the succession of Mustapha IV. Napoleon basely pretended that this circumstance released him from the engagements he had made to the Turkish government, under the pretext that they had been made with Selim personally, and not with his successor. Therefore, though he had made repeated promises of assistance and friendship to the Ottoman government, which he declared to be the faithful ally of France, yet he entered into an engagement with Alexander for the ruin and partition of the Turkish empire. The policy of Napoleon, in this respect, was as erroneous as it was dishonest. After the peace of Tilsit, Alexander was enabled to pursue his aggressive measures with regard to Turkey; but Napoleon, engrossed with his ambitious scheme with regard to the Spanish peninsula, was unable to appropriate his share of the calculated spoils of the Ottoman empire. He therefore repented of the ready consent he had given to the aggressive movements of Russia in that direction, and became desirous of throwing every obstacle in the way of their further prosecution.

Napoleon preferred seeing Alexander waste his strength on the banks of the Danube. No sooner, therefore, was he engaged in his projects with respect to Spain, than he wrote to the Russian autocrat, saying that the armistice on the Danube had been concluded without his authority; that it did not meet his approval, and that the Russian troops might remain in the principalities; but that, as to the final partition of the Ottoman empire, that was so grave a question, that it required mature consideration. This was not the only incident adverse to the interests of Napoleon, arising from his treachery towards the Turks at Tilsit. Though the latter gladly availed themselves of the French mediation with Russia, it was in the belief that they were to obtain through it the evacuation of Moldavia and Wallachia. When they found that this was not the case, they scorned a peace under such circumstances, and expressed their resolution to continue the contest. "In what worse situation," said they, "could we be if the

French, instead of being victorious, had been beaten in Poland? Is this the emperor's care for his allies, whom he has drawn into the conflict, to leave their richest provinces in the hands of their enemies?" Some rumours of the nature of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit soon afterwards reached the Turks, and, finding that they had been betrayed by Napoleon, they resolved on fighting out their quarrel with Russia alone, and declining any further intervention on the part of the French.

Simultaneously with the aggressive war on Turkey, Alexander was engaged in another unprincipled war on the shores of the Caspian, in making acquisitions at the expense of his feeble neighbours the Persians. Unable to contend successfully against her vast military power, and hopeless of assistance or relief from England (whose good offices for the restoration of peace with Russia they had vainly solicited during the last administration of Pitt), they, in 1806, sent an embassy to Paris to request the aid of the emperor Napoleon. That wonderful man, whose ambition was boundless, and whose views were still turned towards the East, had already dispatched a member of the French senate on a secret mission to Persia, to promote his schemes and advance his interests in that quarter. He did not, however, lend assistance to the Persians in the struggle with Russia, and was, probably, too much occupied with his affairs in Europe to be able to do so.

It is scarcely possible, and certainly unnecessary, to give an accurate account of the predatory warfare which followed between the troops of Persia and Russia. Though the Russians were generally successful, in consequence of their superior discipline and experience, yet they were unable to compel the warlike tribes and their chiefs to bow to the Russian sceptre. The war was not terminated until 1813. The principal events of it were—the defeat of the Persians at Etchmiazin, by Prince Zitzianoff, in the year 1804; the conquest of the province of Shirvan, by the same commander, in 1806; and the taking of Derbent by the Russians, and the defeat of the Persians by Paulucci, at Alkolwalaki, in 1810.



## CHAPTER XLVIII.

DISCONTENT OF THE RUSSIAN NOBLES AND MERCHANTS AT THE FRENCH ALLIANCE, AND CONSEQUENT SUPPRESSION OF TRADE WITH ENGLAND; TREATMENT OF GENERAL SAVARY AT ST. PETERSBURG; ALEXANDER OFFERS HIS MEDIATION TO THE ENGLISH MINISTRY; IN REPLY, IT DESIRES A COMMUNICATION OF THE SECRET ARTICLES OF THE TREATY OF TILSIT; BOMBARDMENT OF COPENHAGEN, AND SEIZURE OF THE DANISH FLEET BY THE ENGLISH; ALEXANDER DECLARES WAR AGAINST ENGLAND; ALSO AGAINST SWEDEN, AND POURS HIS TROOPS INTO FINLAND; FINLAND CEDED TO RUSSIA; A RUSSIAN FLEET AT LISBON SURRENDERS TO THE ENGLISH; NAPOLEON INVITES ALEXANDER TO A PERSONAL INTERVIEW; OBJECTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN PARTY AND OF THE EMPRESS-MOTHER; MEETING OF THE TWO EMPERORS AT ERFURTH.

RUSSIA had extricated herself from the war with France comparatively unscathed, and with her military renown untarnished. Though repulsed and defeated by the French, she had sustained reverses with a heroism that proclaimed the valour of her soldiers, who had only failed before the troops of the most military people in the world, led by its most gifted general. Alexander, therefore, was received, on his return to St. Petersburg, with public acclamations; but much discontent and sullenness prevailed in private, especially among the nobility and the merchants of the capital. The French alliance was unpopular; for the power of France had shown that the pretensions of Russia were greater than her means to support them, and the nobles and merchants were enriched by their trade with England, which the arrangements Alexander had acceded to were to repress. The balance of trade with that country was wholly in favour of Russia; yet the differences existing with it threatened to result in war, which must necessarily be accompanied with immense losses. The nobles of Russia were aware, that whatever advantages the czar might derive from the treaty into which he had just entered with France, that he had purchased them by acceding to Napoleon's "continental system," and the consequent closing of the ports of the empire to the ships of Great Britain. "Assuredly," observed a continental writer, "Alexander bought the peace of Tilsit at a price much more heavy than would have been paid by a disastrous campaign. Nothing could be more menacing and serious to Russia than a rupture with England. That manufacturing country is the chief market for her raw materials. The Russian proprietors, kept continually poor by their habits of pomp and ostentation, are always eager to sell, and cannot at

best find sufficient market for their produce; accordingly, the two countries are necessary the one to the other. The commerce established by the ordinance of nature is advantageous to England, but it is indispensable to the Russians; and the czar should have had very weighty reasons for putting a stop to it."

Napoleon, desirous of retaining the influence he had obtained over Alexander, sent General Savary to St. Petersburg, as the ambassador of France, with directions to apply all the resources of his mind to cultivate and give stability to the alliance concluded at Tilsit. On arriving at the Russian capital, Savary was received with extreme coldness by the court, with the exception of the emperor and two or three families composing his intimate society. The execution of the Duke d'Enghien, which was performed under the immediate direction of Savary, contributed to this result; the chief cause of which, however, was the remembrance of recent hostilities and defeats, and the aversion to the French alliance. Alexander endeavoured to persuade every one, that in the termination of the recent war by a reconciliation with France, events had taken the most favourable turn possible: that his late ministers, in embroiling him with that power, had led him into a fatal track, from which he had extricated himself with equal good fortune and skill: that he had committed but one error—that of having believed in the valour of the Prussian army, and in the integrity of England. But these illusions, he said, were now dispelled; and by the union of the two great armies of Europe—those of France and Russia—the peace and greatness of both empires would follow. Peace, if England would at length desist from its maritime pretensions; and greatness, if she did not oblige Europe to lead with her a



life of torment and sacrifices ; in which case every one must take care of himself and his own interests, and that it was time for Russia to think of her's. Having arrived at this point of his explanations, Alexander—not daring to reveal all the hopes which Napoleon had permitted him to conceive, nor, above all, to avow the occult treaty which they had promised themselves to keep profoundly secret—assumed an air of mystery, but of satisfaction ; leaving all to be guessed that he durst not venture to tell, though strongly tempted to do so. Thus, speaking of Turkey, he said openly that he was about to sign an armistice with her, but should take care not to evacuate the provinces of the Danube, where his troops would remain for a long time ; and that no difficulty would be raised at Paris on the subject of this prolonged occupation. Alexander was warmly seconded by M. de Romanzoff, who, besides being acquainted with everything, had served the empress Catherine, and inherited her oriental ambition. The minister, like the monarch, repeated that his listeners must have patience, and that they would soon have a satisfactory explanation to give of the change of politics effected at Tilsit.

But the words of the emperor fell on incredulous and unwilling ears. He could not induce his nobility to extend their hospitality to the French ambassador, or treat him otherwise than with a cutting coldness. The example of Alexander, who lavished every attention upon General Savary, and invited him frequently to his table, prevailed to open some of the great houses in St. Petersburg to him. Still he was excluded by most of the distinguished families ; for Alexander, though master of power, was, nevertheless, not master of high society ; which was ruled by a loyalty and code of its own. The emperor having anticipated his possession of the sceptre by a tragic catastrophe, strove to compensate his mother (who had descended before her time to the station of dowager), by leaving to her the exterior of supreme power. This princess, who mingled a stiff conventional virtue with a selfish nature and a haughty manner, consoled herself for her apparent loss with Paul of half of the empire, by the ostentatious display of imperial splendour. The court assembled at her residence, and not at Alexander's. His life was generally devoid of state. Entertaining a dislike to the empress his wife (who was a cold and grave

beauty), he hastened, after his repasts, to leave the palace, to employ himself in business with the statesmen who were his confidants, or to devote his hours to pleasure in the society of a Russian lady to whom he was much attached. As to the courtiers, or those who had favours to obtain, they thronged around the empress-mother as if she were the sole author of the acts of the imperial power. Even Alexander made his appearance there with the assiduity of a submissive son who had not yet inherited the paternal sceptre. Though the empress-mother would neither use or permit any language calculated to displease her son, she took no pains to disguise her evident aversion to the French. General Savary she had treated with rudeness, actually turning her back upon him before the assembled court. The French ambassador received the insult without emotion ; but he adroitly hinted to the son, that he was not unobservant of the slights put upon him by the empress-dowager. Alexander was annoyed, and apprehensive lest, under his affected respect for his mother, a foreigner might not recognise the real master of the empire. Grasping the general's hand, he said—"There is no sovereign here but myself ; I respect my mother, but everybody shall obey, be assured of it. At all events, whoever needs it, shall be reminded of the nature and the extent of my authority." Savary was satisfied with having brought the emperor to such a confidential communication by piquing the imperial pride. The result appeared in some show of cordiality on the part of the empress-mother. "Let us wait," said Alexander frequently to the ambassador, "and see what England will do. Let us know what course she will pursue ; I will then break out : and when I have declared myself, nobody shall resist."

The result of the peace of Tilsit in England was to produce despondency, and to remove the hope that the war with France could be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. According to his agreement with Napoleon, Alexander, on his arrival at St. Petersburg, had addressed a note to the British cabinet, expressing a wish for the restoration of a general peace, and offering his mediation to bring about a state of amity between France and England. Mr. Canning answered—that England was perfectly willing to treat, on equitable terms, for so desirable an object ; but she required



a frank communication of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, as a pledge of the pacific intentions of the emperor Alexander. This demand was eluded; and, in reply, Baron Budberg entered into a statement of grievances said to have been sustained by Russia at the hands of this country.

The king of Sweden was the only continental sovereign who refused to submit to the domination of Napoleon. Before the conclusion of peace between France and Russia, Gustavus IV. denounced the armistice existing between them. Napoleon instantly dispatched 30,000 men, under Marshal Brune, to Sweden; and the Swedish forces, numbering but 15,000, were compelled to take refuge within the fortifications of Stralsund. For a short time they were supported by 10,000 English troops; but these were soon withdrawn, to assist in an expedition against Copenhagen, to which we shall presently refer; and the Swedes were left to their fate. Finding the fall of the city certain, Gustavus, at the earnest request of the citizens, abandoned it with his troops, after the latter had destroyed their magazines, spiked their cannon, smashed their carriages, and thrown them into the ditches. Stralsund itself, on the 20th of August, with 400 pieces of cannon and immense military magazines, fell into the hands of the French. After some further struggles the Swedes submitted; a convention was concluded, and the French troops withdrawn.

All the precautions of Napoleon and Alexander had been unable to preserve in secrecy their private treaty of Tilsit. By means of bribery the English government obtained a knowledge of the fact, that the fleets of Denmark and Portugal were to be placed at the disposal of France, and, consequently, to be employed against this country. Denmark was in an unfortunate position, for she dared not resist the demands of France, sanctioned by the power of Russia; and to consent to them was to place herself in a dangerous attitude of hostility towards England. The ministry of this country were aware, that if Napoleon could carry out his projects, they would be subjected to an attack from the combined navies of Europe. They therefore resolved to anticipate the efforts of the enemy. A powerful naval force, consisting of twenty-seven sail-of-the-line and numerous other vessels, having on board a body of 20,000 troops, was hurriedly prepared and sent to

the Danish coast, where it arrived on the 3rd of August, 1807. Immediately, a demand was made that the Danish fleet should be deposited with the British government in pledge, and under an obligation of restitution, until the conclusion of a general peace. This demand was indignantly refused. The English troops were therefore disembarked, and the city of Copenhagen invested. So rapid and unexpected had been the proceedings of the English, that the Danes were quite unprepared to resist the formidable forces by sea and land which threatened them. Still they persevered in their rejection of the offers of the invaders,\* and the unfortunate city was bombarded for three days and nights, during which period 1,800 houses were destroyed by fire, and 1,500 of the inhabitants perished. The Danes then hung out a flag of truce; but the English would not agree to any terms except on the *unconditional* surrender of the fleet, together with all the artillery and naval stores which the place contained. The Danes were compelled to accept these severe terms, and the invading fleet and army returned to England, bringing with them the prize they had captured, consisting of eighteen ships of the line, fifteen frigates, six brigs, and twenty-five gun-boats!

An extraordinary sensation was produced throughout Europe by this apparently wanton outrage against a neutral nation, without any previous declaration of war, or known ground of hostility. This feeling was shared by the English people, who, not understanding the motive of the government, were astonished at its conduct. Napoleon was incensed, and assumed to be deeply affected by the catastrophe, while Alexander characterised the proceeding as "a piratical expedition," and condemned it as an uncalled-for violation of the law of nations. The English cabinet, desirous of justifying itself with the principal courts of Europe, sent Lord Pembroke to Vienna, and General Wilson to St. Petersburg, for that purpose. The English ambassador also stated that his cabinet had received information of the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, and the intended co-operation of the Danish fleet in a descent on the

\* The crown prince is said to have exclaimed—"You offer your alliance; but we know what it is worth! Your allies, who have been vainly expecting your succours for a whole year, have taught us what is the value of English friendship."



British shores, and called upon the Russian minister to disprove the assertion by an unreserved communication of these hidden stipulations. The demand was refused, and Alexander signified his intention to General Savary immediately to declare war against England, if the emperor Napoleon insisted on it.\* "Tell your master," said the emperor, "that as soon as my means are prepared, I will crush Sweden; but, as for the English, I am ready to declare myself immediately."

If Alexander was already playing false with France (which we doubt), he must have been the most abandoned of hypocrites. His language to Savary expressed the most ardent attachment to the French emperor. "I shall be told," said he to that general, "that Napoleon is insatiable; that he wants all for himself, nothing for others; that he is equally crafty and violent; that he promises me much, but will give me nothing; that he spares me just now, but when he has got out of me all that he wishes, he will fall upon me in my turn; and that, separated from my allies, whom I shall have suffered to be destroyed, I must make up my mind to endure the same fate. I believe it not. I have seen Napoleon; I flatter myself that I have inspired him with a portion of the sentiments with which he has inspired me; and I am certain that he is sincere. On the first doubt, on the first unpleasant impression, let him write to me, or send me word, and all shall be explained. For my part, I promise him entire frankness, and I expect the like from him. Oh that I could see him, as at Tilsit, every day, every hour!—what talent for conversation!—what an understanding!—what a genius!—what a gainer I should be by living frequently near him!—how many things he has

taught me in a few days! I am doing all I can to render mutual confidence as complete as possible, but I do not exercise that ascendancy here which Napoleon has attained at Paris. This country, you perceive, has been surprised at the rather too abrupt change which has taken place. It is apprehensive of the injuries which the English can inflict on its commerce; it is angry at your victories. These are interests which must be gratified; sentiments which must be soothed. Send French merchants hither; buy our naval stores and our productions; we, in return, will buy your Paris commodities; the re-establishment of commerce will put an end to all the anxieties which the upper classes entertain on account of their revenues. Assist me, above all, to do something for the just ambition of Russia." The latter remark referred to the emperor's designs on Turkey, and especially on Constantinople. This last Napoleon avoided expressing an opinion on to Alexander, whom he desired to be content with the acquisition of Finland. Compliments and presents passed between the two potentates, and Napoleon sent word to the emperor, that the minister Dècres was about to purchase twenty million worth of naval stores in the ports of Russia; and, in answer to an application to that effect, that the French navy would receive all the Russian cadets who should be sent to it for instruction, and that 50,000 muskets, after the best model, were at the disposal of the imperial government.

The influence of Napoleon over Alexander induced the latter to make the bombardment of Copenhagen, and the seizure of the Danish fleet, a pretext for breaking off all relations with England, and proclaiming anew the principles of the

\* The great power of dissimulation possessed and constantly exercised by Alexander, has perplexed many writers, and makes it sometimes difficult to ascertain what were his real sentiments. From the following passage in Sir Walter Scott's *Life of Napoleon*, presumed to be founded on official information, it is made to appear that the cabinet of St. Petersburg, though obliged to yield to circumstances, was secretly gratified at the vigorous and decisive blow struck at the Danish fleet:—"An English officer of literary celebrity was employed by Alexander, or those who were supposed to share his most secret councils, to convey to the British ministry the emperor's expression of the secret satisfaction which his imperial majesty felt at the skill and dexterity which Britain had displayed in anticipating and preventing the purposes of France by her attack upon Copenhagen. Her ministers were invited to communicate freely with the czar, as with a prince

who, though obliged to yield to circumstances, was, nevertheless, as much as ever attached to the cause of European independence." The first communications the British ministers made in accordance with this invitation, however, were received with such coldness, as to show that either the agent had overstepped his instructions, or that the emperor had changed his mind. Count Hardenberg, the distinguished Prussian minister, said—"The capture of the Danish fleet was not the *cause*, but the *pretext* of the rupture of Russia with England. The cabinet of St. Petersburg was not sorry at so fair an opportunity for getting quit of all restraints upon its meditated hostilities in the north; and, notwithstanding all its loud declamations against the Copenhagen expedition, it beheld with more satisfaction the success of England in that quarter, than it would have done the junction of the Danish fleet with the navy of the French emperor."



armed neutrality. The imperial declaration to this effect, issued on the 16th of October, 1807, reproached the English cabinet with withholding assistance from Russia and Prussia when they were engaged in a war which it had kindled—with having acted in a hostile manner to the commercial vessels of Russia at the very time when the blood of its people flowed for the interest of England in the struggle against France—with rejecting the mediation of Russia to effect a general pacification—and with sending her fleets and armies to the coasts of Denmark, “to execute there an act of violence of which history, so fertile in wickedness, does not afford a parallel example.” Mr. Canning, in an able reply, observed—“The vindication of the Copenhagen expedition is already before the world, and Russia has it in her power at once to disprove the basis on which it is erected, by producing the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit. These secret articles were not communicated to his majesty—they are not yet communicated—not even that which prescribed a time for the acceptance, by Great Britain, of the proffered mediation of Russia. Even after this unworthy concealment, however, so unsuitable to the dignity of an independent sovereign, the mediation was not refused: it was conditionally accepted, and the conditions were a communication of the basis on which the proposed treaty was to be founded, and of the secret articles of Tilsit. \* \* \* Instead of granting either of these demands, Russia declares war.”

Alexander followed his hostile declaration against England by summoning the king of Sweden to join in the league against it, by acceding to the continental system of excluding English commerce and manufactures. Gustavus, relying on the support of England, resolutely declined, and thus bade defiance to the united power of Russia and of France. War was therefore declared against him by Russia, and Count Buxhovden entered Finland at the head of a Russian army of 25,000, in the February of 1808. There he issued a proclamation, which contained the following passage:—“Good neighbours,—It is with the greatest regret that my most gracious master, the emperor of all the Russias, sees himself forced to send into your country the troops under my orders. But his majesty the king of Sweden, whilst withdrawing more and more from the happy alliance of the two greatest empires in the world, draws

closer his connections with the common enemy, whose oppressive system and unparalleled conduct towards the most intimate allies of Russia and of Sweden herself, cannot be coolly endured by his imperial majesty. These motives, as well as the regard which his imperial majesty owes to the safety of his own states, *oblige him to place your country under his protection*, and to take possession of it in order to procure by these means a sufficient guarantee in case his Swedish majesty should persevere in the resolution not to accept the equitable conditions of peace that have been proposed to him.”

Gustavus, naturally irritated at a war being commenced by an invitation to his subjects to break their allegiance, issued a declaration, in which he personally reproached the Russian emperor with perfidy and meanness, and declared that the war, “based on the avowed design of Russia to dictate all their foreign connections to the northern powers, was undertaken for no other object than to add Finland to the Russian dominions, and compel Sweden to sacrifice her fleet and commerce as a security for Cronstadt and Revel.” But the struggle was an unequal one; and, after much fighting, in a series of petty but brilliant actions, which proved the bravery of the troops of both nations, Finland was, partly by bribery and partly by the bravery of the Russian troops, annexed to the Russian empire. By an imperial ukase, issued on the 28th of March, Alexander declared—“We unite Finland, conquered by our arms, for ever to our empire, and command its inhabitants forthwith to take the oath of allegiance to our throne.” This declaration was, however, somewhat premature, for the struggle was prolonged after this period; but the Russian forces were largely reinforced; accumulated misfortunes fell upon the Swedes; and they were driven to sign a convention in November, 1808, by which the whole of Finland, to the east of the Gulf of Bothnia, was ceded to Russia. In the following year Gustavus, whose despotic conduct had rendered him hateful to his subjects, was dethroned by them; and the first care of his successor was to conclude a peace with Russia.

The acquisition of Finland was of great importance to Russia, as it secured its ascendancy in the Baltic. It is regarded as a great political fault, on the part of Napoleon, that he suffered Russia to make itself master



of this formidable bulwark of the north; but that was the price he paid for the neutrality of Alexander with respect to Spain. "France and Russia," observes a modern historian, "relying on each other's support, now laid aside all moderation, and even the semblance of justice, in their proceedings; and, strong in their mutual forbearance, instantly proceeded to appropriate, without scruple, the possessions of all other states—even unoffending neutrals, or faithful allies—which lay on their own side of the line of demarcation. It was easy to see that the present concord which subsisted between them could not last. The world was not wide enough for two such great and ambitious powers, any more than it had been for Alexander and Darius, Rome and Carthage. Universal empire, to one or other, would, it was likely, be the result of a desperate strife between them; and in that case it would be hard to say whether the independence of Great Britain had most to fear from the Scythian or the Gallic hosts."

At this period, however, Russia received a considerable check at sea from the hands of England. A Russian fleet, consisting of ten ships of war, under the command of Admiral Siniavin, was dispatched to Lisbon for the purpose of compelling the Portuguese to declare against England, and to adopt the continental system. The fleet imprudently remained at Lisbon in fancied security, as the French were in possession of that city. During this period the convention of Cintra was signed, and the French abandoned Portugal. A few days afterwards the Russian fleet surrendered to Admiral Cotton, without firing a shot, on the condition that the vessels should be restored when peace was concluded. England acted with peculiar moderation; and instead of making the officers and crews prisoners of war, sent them back to Russia at her own expense. Some French writers have made the (to us improbable) conjecture, that this bloodless capture had been previously arranged between the two powers, and thus furnished another instance of the dissatisfaction of Alexander at the conditions he had entered into at Tilsit, and his readiness to employ duplicity to evade them. Certainly, heavy reasons existed to account for any dissatisfaction, if it had yet begun to be entertained. From the official accounts of the Russian trade up to

treaty of Tilsit, it appeared to have been

continually increasing; and nearly 4,000 merchant ships, of which a fourth part were English, annually entered the ports of the empire; but in 1808, the number that arrived in the eighteen most considerable ports, was less than 1,000; of which only 300 visited the ports of the Baltic. The soundest policy for Russia was peace; for in the war with France, Alexander had been compelled to call upon the rich for extraordinary contributions, which they readily furnished in great abundance. Further wars necessarily led to new sacrifices; but, as matters stood, this great empire occupied the undignified position of being no longer at liberty to follow its own policy, but was compelled to make war according to the arrangements of Napoleon. Some little misunderstanding had certainly commenced between Alexander and Napoleon; and the former expostulated earnestly with M. de Caulaincourt (who had succeeded General Savary as ambassador at St. Petersburg), on the prolonged occupation of Prussia by the troops of Napoleon. Alexander also desired to be permitted to annex the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia to the Russian empire, to which Napoleon now made some objection, as it was not agreeable to him to have to lead the Russians by the hand to Constantinople, or bring them nearer to that object of their ambition.

Since the peace of Presburg, Austria had remained neutral in the struggle which had been carried on against the ambition of France. She was now, however, despite her earnest protestations to the French emperor to the contrary, preparing to renew the war. The cabinet of Vienna deemed the opportunity favourable, on account of the occupation of the French armies in Spain; and it was evident that they were ready to declare against Napoleon on the first opportunity. To overawe Austria was one of the reasons which made Napoleon write to the emperor Alexander, desiring a personal interview. The former believed that the Austrian government would scarcely dare to recommence hostilities with France, when in a close friendly alliance with the next most powerful military state in Europe. Another reason was, that Napoleon was exasperated against the Turks, who, asserting that France aimed at sacrificing them to Russian ambition, behaved with a defiant ferocity towards the French at Constantinople. Napoleon, therefore, in inviting Alexander to personal conference with him,



held out to that ambitious potentate a lure which to him was irresistible—that is, the complete partition of the Ottoman empire; and, consequently, the probable permission to proceed undisturbed against the Turks until he had obtained possession of Constantinople. In his letter to Alexander, Napoleon announced his intention of discussing the question of the empire of the East, of considering it under all its aspects, and of solving it definitely. He also expressed a desire to admit Austria as a sharer in the spoliation of Turkey; and, returning to the wild scheme which he had entertained in concert with the late emperor Paul, specified as an essential condition of this partition, a gigantic expedition to India, across the continent of Asia, executed by a French, Russian, and Austrian army.

Alexander received the invitation of his ally with transports of joy, and read it instantly in the presence of the French ambassador. “Ah, the great man!” he frequently exclaimed while doing so; “the great man! There, he has come back to the ideas of Tilsit!” Then, addressing M. de Caulaincourt (the ambassador), the emperor said, in reference to Napoleon—“Tell him that I am devoted to him for life; that my empire, my armies, and all, are at his disposal. Your master,” he added, “purposes to interest Austria in the dismemberment of the Turkish empire; he is in the right. It is a wise conception; I cordially join in it. He designs an expedition to India; I consent to that too; I have already made him acquainted, in our long conversations at Tilsit, with the difficulties attending it. He is accustomed to take no account of obstacles; nevertheless, the climate and distances here present such as surpass all that he can imagine. But let him be easy; the preparations on my part shall be proportioned to the difficulties. Now we must come to an understanding about the distribution of the territories which we are going to wrest from Turkish barbarism. Discuss this subject thoroughly with M. de Romanzoff. Still we must bear in mind, that all this cannot be discussed usefully and definitively but in an interview between me and Napoleon.”

On the proposal of Alexander, Erfurth (a town of Upper Saxony) was selected as the place of meeting between him and Napoleon; and September was the time named. The latter caused every preparation to be made, for the purpose of giving dignity and

brilliancy to the meeting of two such powerful potentates. Four fine regiments were ordered to march to Erfurth, where they were to act as a guard of honour to the sovereigns present at the interview. Officers of his household were sent with the richest portions of the crown furniture, in order that the largest houses in the town might be arranged to suit the wants of the distinguished persons about to be collected there; consisting of emperors, kings, princes, ministers, and generals. The tragedian Talma, and the first French actors, were also commanded to repair to Erfurth, in order that the dramatic literature of France should contribute to distinguish so remarkable an incident. Finally, Napoleon gave orders for the display of an extravagant sumptuousness; for he desired that France should command respect by her elegance and civilisation as much as by her arms. The large party at St. Petersburg who were hostile to the French alliance bitterly censured the proposed meeting. The free speech of the court of the empress-mother, on this subject, was with difficulty restrained by the express command of Alexander. She herself broke out into violent reproaches against Romanzoff, telling him that he was leading her son to destruction, and that perhaps at Erfurth a fate awaited him similar to what had befallen the unhappy sovereigns of Spain at Bayonne.\* Finally, she expressed her apprehensions to Alexander himself, who did his best to assure her that her fears were without foundation.

The Russian emperor arrived at Erfurth on the 27th of September, 1808, accompanied by his brother the Grand-duke Constantine; the minister Romanzoff, the French ambassador, and a few aides-de-camp, having travelled in a plain *calèche* more rapidly than the most hurried couriers. Napoleon had arrived on the morning of the same day; and, on the approach of Alexander, rode out, surrounded by an immense staff, to meet him. On alighting they embraced each other cordially, with every sign of extreme pleasure. A great number of sovereigns, generals, and diplomatists had been invited, and were present to give dignity to the occasion: amongst them were Prince William of Prussia and the king of Saxony. Germany was repre-

\* At Bayonne, Charles IV. and his son Ferdinand—to which place they had been invited by Napoleon—were intimidated into a renunciation of the Spanish crown.



sented by a crowd of crown princes, as well as by many of its men of genius, including Goethe and Wieland; and the old and quiet town assumed a most animated and brilliant appearance. The place was thronged with soldiers, officers, equipages, and servants in livery; while princes and distinguished statesmen met in the street as simple pedestrians. The kings and princes invited were to dine every day at Napoleon's table, as he was the host, and the sovereign of the north was his guest. In the evening of the 27th the town was illuminated; and, after the crowd of imperial, royal, and titled persons had partaken of a splendid banquet, the tragedy of *Cinna* was performed before them by the most accomplished actors France ever possessed.

Between the numerous entertainments which took place, Napoleon and Alexander found time to confer together alone on the important matters they had to arrange. The former had reconsidered the Eastern question, and renounced the idea of the partition of Turkey; for he saw that it was impossible to agree with Alexander on that subject unless he surrendered Constantinople, which he was resolved not to do. As a compensation, however, he agreed to concede Wallachia and Moldavia to Russia, in return for which he required a close alliance for peace and war, and an absolute union of efforts against England and Austria, in the event of the latter power resuming hostilities. Alexander assented; for though somewhat disappointed respecting Constantinople, he was gratified by the cession of Moldavia and Wallachia, which formed a stepping-stone to its acquisition. He renewed his protestations of attachment to Napoleon, and of adherence to his policy, to which friendly statements the latter replied in terms of reciprocity. To bring over Alexander to his views respecting the present partition of Turkey, Napoleon examined in detail with him the various plans that had been proposed for its accomplishment. For himself, he peremptorily withheld his consent that Russia should, if she could, take Constantinople. Then he pointed out the difficulties which Russia would encounter in the execution of such a project. Austria, he said, would certainly not accede to it, whatever offers might be made to her; and she would prefer a desperate conflict to a partition of the Turkish empire. England, Austria, Turkey, Spain, and part of Ger-

many, would join in a last effort to resist this unsettlement of the world. Was the present moment, he urged, such as the two empires ought to choose for so gigantic a work? Would not the attainment of Finland, Moldavia, and Wallachia make the reign of Alexander equally distinguished with those of his predecessors which were the most productive of territorial aggrandisement? Besides, he added, they (the two emperors) were both young; they could afford to wait, and postpone their vast projects respecting the East. Alexander, though not convinced, was satisfied; but he stipulated for the *immediate* possession of the two Danubian provinces.

The first eight or ten days of the period over which the interview was prolonged, was devoted to the consideration of this subject; and great as had been the previous courtesy of the two emperors towards each other, it was from that time expressive of more goodwill than ever. M. Thiers observes—"Alexander especially seemed to blend affection with politics; in the promenade, at table, at the theatre, his demeanour towards his illustrious ally was familiar, deferential, and enthusiastic. When he spoke of him, it was in a tone of admiration, with which no one could fail to be struck." One evening, at the theatre, Alexander paid Napoleon a compliment remarkable for its elegance and aptness. The play was Voltaire's tragedy of *Edipus*; and when the representative of Philoctetes uttered the well-known line—

"L'amitié d'un grand homme est un bienfait des dieux;"\*

Alexander grasped Napoleon's hand, and, with a profound bow, exclaimed—"That I have never more truly felt than at the present moment!"

The most important part of the compact entered into between the two emperors, was that by which Alexander engaged to support Napoleon in the war which was foreseen to be approaching with Austria. Napoleon felt convinced, that if the union between France and Russia was sincere and manifest, that Austria would be forced to remain quiescent, for she would be crushed between the two empires if she attempted to stir; and that the submission of Austria would compel England also to yield and agree to a naval peace. The two emperors also renewed their alliance, and engaged to make peace or war in common. They resolved to

\* "The friendship of a great man is a blessing from the gods."



make a formal proposal of peace to England, in so public and conspicuous a manner, as to render refusal the more difficult on the part of the British cabinet. France, however, was only to consent to such a peace as should insure to Russia, Finland, Moldavia, and Wallachia; while Russia was to consent to such a peace only as should secure to France, independently of her other possessions, the crown of Spain. Immediately after the signing of the convention, Russia might take such steps with respect to the Porte as were necessary to obtain, by peace or war, the two provinces of the Danube; but the language held by Russia to Turkey was to be such as would not compromise the alliance of France with the latter power. At the urgent intercession of Alexander, some modification of the severity of French supremacy was obtained for Prussia. Finally, it was agreed that if the conference did not lead to peace on the continent, the two emperors should meet each other again within a year. Before parting, they wrote a joint letter to the king of England, in which they invited him to conclude a peace on the basis of sacrificing his Spanish allies.\*

Another subject, of a domestic nature, yet fraught with much political significance, was talked of by the two emperors before their separation. It related to a marriage between Napoleon and a sister of Alexander. The former had for some time thought of divorcing Josephine, that he might marry a princess who could give him an heir; but the affection which bound him to the wife of his youth, and the difficulty of fixing his choice, had hitherto proved obstacles to his design. But now an opportunity presented itself, as it was generally reported that Alex-

ander's marriageable sisters were ladies excellently endowed, both with respect to appearance and accomplishments. The pride of Napoleon, however, made him averse to make any proposal, and Alexander never alluded to the subject—a circumstance that almost displeased his imperial friend. On Talleyrand reporting to Napoleon some complimentary observations of the czar, the emperor exclaimed—"If he likes me, let him give me proof of the fact, by uniting himself with me more closely, and bestowing on me one of his sisters. Why has he never said a word to me of this in our daily confidential intercourse? Why does he affect thus to avoid the subject?" The acute minister understood the hint, and brought the subject before Alexander, who received the overture with the most flattering expressions of regard for Napoleon; but he feared that his mother, who exercised an absolute control over her daughters, would not give her consent. The czar added, that he should, doubtless, succeed in favourably disposing his sister the Grand-duchess Catherine, but that he could not flatter himself with the hope of subduing his mother's prejudices, and that he could not bring himself to restrain her by an exertion of his imperial authority. He would, however, make the attempt, but without answering for its success.

The interview terminated on the 14th of October, each emperor lavishing presents and decorations on the suite of the other. They parted with an exhibition of emotion that was probably sincere. "They were never to meet more," observes M. Thiers; "and of their projects of that hour not one was destined to be accomplished!"

\* This letter, dated Erfurth, 12th October, 1808, was as follows:—"Sire,—The present circumstances of Europe have brought us together at Erfurth. Our first thought is to yield to the wishes and wants of every people, and to seek, in a speedy pacification with your majesty, the most efficacious remedy for the miseries which oppress all nations. We make known to your majesty our sincere desire in this respect by the present letter. The long and bloody war which has torn the continent is at an end, without the possibility of being renewed. Many changes have taken place in Europe; many states have been overthrown. The cause is to be found in the state of agitation and misery in which the stagnation of

maritime commerce has placed the greatest nations. Still greater changes may yet take place, and all of them contrary to the policy of the English nation. Peace, then, is at once the interest of the people of the continent, as it is the interest of the people of Great Britain. We unite in entreating your majesty to listen to the voice of humanity, silencing that of the passions; to seek, with the intention of arriving at that object, to conciliate all interests, and by that means to preserve all the powers which exist, and to insure the happiness of Europe, and of the generation at the head of which Providence has placed us.

"ALEXANDER.  
"NAPOLEON."



CHAPTER XLIX.

AUSTRIA BEGINS A NEW WAR WITH NAPOLEON, BUT IS REDUCED, AFTER A SHORT CAMPAIGN, TO PURCHASE PEACE BY THE CESSION OF TERRITORY; ALEXANDER, WHO HAD COLDLY SECONDED NAPOLEON, SHARES THE SPOIL; ABANDONING THE IDEA OF A DOMESTIC ALLIANCE WITH ALEXANDER, NAPOLEON MARRIES MARIA LOUISA, DAUGHTER OF THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA; ALEXANDER FEELS SLIGHTED; REPLY OF ENGLAND TO THE PACIFIC PROPOSALS OF FRANCE AND RUSSIA; ALEXANDER CAUSES THE WAR WITH TURKEY TO BE RENEWED; HE ISSUES AN UKASE, ANNOUNCING THAT MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA ARE ANNEXED TO THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE; AFTER THREE CHEQUERED CAMPAIGNS, ALEXANDER DEEMS IT PRUDENT TO CONCLUDE PEACE WITH TURKEY, BY WHICH HE ABANDONS MOLDAVIA AND WALLACHIA, BUT RETAINS BESSARABIA.

THE Austrian government was deeply wounded in consequence of no representative of it being invited to the conferences at Erfurth; and it naturally anticipated evil to itself from the ominous conjunction of two such powers as France and Russia. Austria had made its preparations, and entered into a secret alliance with England, which, however, wisely advised the government of that empire, not to take any hostile steps against France, unless its resources were clearly equal to the inevitable struggle which such a proceeding would provoke. The Austrian cabinet, notwithstanding the amicable relations which existed between Alexander and Napoleon, actually sent Prince Schwartzemberg to St. Petersburg, with directions to use every effort to obtain the concession of Russia to a new confederacy against France. The Austrian ministry was aware that Alexander was capable of acting with the unblushing treachery towards his friend and ally which their application implied, and they knew that, though fascinated by the manners and the vast schemes of Napoleon, he yet had a lingering belief in the assumed necessity of ultimately joining in a confederacy for the deliverance of Europe from the aggressive ambition of France. "In truth," observes Alison of his imperial idol, "the emperor Alexander was much perplexed how to act; the obvious interests of his empire impelling him one way, and his secret engagements with Napoleon, another. After a short struggle, however, the latter prevailed. Alexander had given his word to the French emperor; and though capable of the utmost dissimulation,

so far as the mere obligations of cabinets were concerned, the czar was scrupulously faithful to any personal engagements which he had undertaken.\* He was occupied, moreover, with those great schemes of ambition, both on his northern and southern frontier, which had formed the bait by which Napoleon had lured him into the French alliance, and little inclined to forego present and certain conquests in Finland and Moldavia, for the problematical advantages of a contest in the heart of Germany. All attempts to engage Russia in the confederacy, therefore, proved abortive; and the utmost which the Austrian envoy could obtain from the imperial cabinet, was a secret assurance that Russia, if compelled to take a part in the strife, would not, at least, bring forward any formidable force against the Austrian legions."

Austria commenced the war on the 8th of April, 1809, and at first achieved some successes; but the campaign, during which Vienna was taken by the French, concluded in the July following with the bloody battle of Wagram, in which 24,000 Austrians were killed or wounded. So obstinate was the conflict, that the loss of the French nearly equalled that of their vanquished foes. The emperor Francis desired an armistice, which was followed by a peace signed at Vienna on the 14th of October. Austria purchased this peace by large territorial concessions to the French; and Alexander, who had assisted Napoleon with an army of 30,000 men, received for his share of the spoils of Austria, the eastern part of Galicia in ancient Poland; a territory containing a population of 420,000 persons.

\* There is a moral contradiction in this sentiment. It is not permitted to a gentleman to be publicly false and privately true; treacherous with respect to duties, yet sincere with regard to his friendships: indeed, it is not, strictly speaking, possible. In such cases the truth and sincerity are

semblances, not realities. Alexander showed, in the sequel, that though fascinated by Napoleon, he had never entertained any really earnest friendship for him; both of them, in fact, were much too selfish to be deeply influenced by an emotion the essence of which is self-denial.



On the 15th of December, 1809, the marriage of Napoleon with the empress Josephine was dissolved by an act of the senate, and a jointure of 2,000,000 francs, or £80,000 a-year, settled upon the unhappy lady. Napoleon, anxious for an heir, and feeling the want of historical descent, now hesitated whether he should ally himself with the imperial family of Russia, or with that of Austria. He desired that his contemplated marriage should not only, by giving him a son, make him the founder of a new dynasty, but that it should serve his foreign policy by consolidating his system of alliances. The recent policy of Napoleon pointed to a Russian alliance; but since the interview at Erfurth, some coolness had arisen between him and Alexander, whom, he complained, had but ill seconded him in the war with Austria. The mother of Alexander, filled with the haughty prejudices of the high aristocracy of Europe, had hurriedly married her daughter, the Grand-duchess Catherine, to the Duke of Oldenburg, in order to avoid a domestic alliance with Napoleon. The latter, however, was not yet diverted from his purpose; and he directed his ambassador at St. Petersburg to propose to Alexander for the hand of his younger sister, the Grand-duchess Anne. Alexander replied, that he would consult his mother, without compromising the French emperor on the subject. Anxious at the same time to take advantage of the wishes of his imperial ally, he bargained, as the price of his sister's person, that a convention should be entered into, binding Napoleon never to reconstruct the kingdom of Poland.

The French emperor, impatient of the delays created by Alexander, demanded, on the 10th of January, 1810, a categorical answer in the space of ten days. This period was consumed in discussions with the empress-mother, who spoke of the extreme youth of the grand-duchess, who was only sixteen, and of the difference in their religion. In conclusion, she demanded a Russian chapel and priests in the Tuileries, and the delay of a few months, to prepare the young princess for so important a change in her condition. Napoleon was annoyed. "To adjourn," said he, "is to refuse; besides, I do not choose to have foreign priests in my palace, between my wife and myself." Before the negotiations with Russia were concluded, he proposed for the hand of the Archduchess Maria

Louisa, the daughter of the emperor of Austria. Francis instantly assented to the proposal, in which he thought he saw the security of his own empire, and the breaking up of the union between France and Russia. The young lady also accepted the brilliant proposal with becoming reserve, but with real delight. She was eighteen, of a good figure, and a fair German complexion. "She is not beautiful," said Napoleon on a subsequent occasion, "but she is the daughter of the Cæsars." The marriage was celebrated with extraordinary pomp at St. Cloud, on the 1st of April; and the following day the emperor and empress made their entrance into Paris amidst the roar of artillery, the clang of bells, and the excited acclamations of the people.

Alexander, though he had shown no particular solicitude for the connection of Napoleon with his sister, experienced a sense of slight and mortification at seeing him married to the scion of a rival imperial family. This feeling was apparent even in the congratulations he caused to be conveyed to Napoleon on the occasion; indeed, he could not but feel that the hand of his sister was, to some extent, discarded, even while the proposal for it was under consideration at St. Petersburg. "Personally, I may have some reason to complain," said he to the French ambassador, "but I do not do so; I rejoice at whatever is for the good of France." Alexander deceived himself; and so strong was the sense of irritation which he felt on this point, that it materially contributed to the coldness which soon afterwards sprung up between the two courts.

England did not shrink from the prospect of having nearly the whole continent arrayed against her, in the event of her refusing to come to terms with Napoleon and Alexander. She had braved this position before, and found the result not so serious as would reasonably be supposed. Still mistress of the seas, she was comparatively secure against the efforts of her adversaries. It had been found impossible effectually to close the continent against her from one end to the other; and the attempt, therefore, to annihilate her commerce was a failure. At this period also, great enthusiasm existed in England on behalf of the Spaniards; and the nation was not so desirous of peace as to wish to obtain it on the condition of sacrificing an



ally. Mr. Canning, therefore, replied to the overtures of France and Russia—that England, though she had often received proposals for peace which she had strong reasons for not believing to be sincere, would never refuse to listen to overtures of that kind, so long as they were honourable to her. She accordingly insisted that all her allies, the Spanish insurgents as well as the others, should be included in the negotiations. On this condition, Mr. Canning affirmed himself ready to name plenipotentiaries, and to send them wherever their presence might be desired. Napoleon would not consent to the admission of the Spanish insurgents; and England declared the pacific proposals addressed to her to be illusory; that the negotiations were, therefore, to be considered as broken off; and that war would be continued with all the energy called for by the circumstances.

Alexander, feeling that a quarrel with Napoleon was by no means improbable, availed himself of the advantages of his friendship, while it lasted, to crush the power of Turkey, and possess himself of the Danubian principalities. By the treaty of Tilsit, an armistice was arranged between Russia and Turkey; but the Russian troops had, since that period, retained possession of Moldavia and Wallachia. Active hostilities had not, however, been renewed; for Russia had been occupied with the conquest of Finland, and Turkey distracted by a series of tumults and revolutions which terminated in the exaltation of the able and inflexible Mahmoud to the throne of the sultans. But, on the termination of the war with Finland, Napoleon abandoned the principalities to Russia, and Alexander caused his army on the banks of the Danube to be reinforced, until it amounted to 80,000 infantry and 25,000 cavalry; and gave directions to Prince Prozorowski, its commander, to cross that river and carry the war into the heart of the Turkish territories.

Notwithstanding the powerful force of the Russians, which was far superior to that brought into the field by the Turks, the former experienced many reverses, besides suffering severely from the unhealthiness of the climate. The campaign of 1809, however, terminated somewhat successfully for the Russians, who resolved to carry on their operations with increased vigour during the following year. On the 21st of January, 1810, Alexander issued an imperial ukase, announcing that Moldavia and Wallachia,

which, for three years, had been occupied by his troops, *were annexed to the Russian empire*; the southern boundary of which, it said, was now the course of the Danube from the frontiers of Austria to the Black Sea.

During the campaign of 1810, Silistria, one of the strongest places on the Danube, was taken by the Russians, while Tourtoukai and Rasgrad yielded soon after to the terrors of a bombardment. The Russians were, however, repulsed from the famous stronghold of Shumla, after several weeks spent in fruitless efforts before it. They then undertook the siege of the Turkish town of Roudschouck, which was defended by Hassan Pasha, a man of cool judgment and considerable military skill. Acting upon the peculiar tactics of his country, he did not return the fire of the besiegers until the day of the assault, the 3rd of August. The Russians were then received with a murderous fire from every roof, window, and loophole from which a gun or musket could be brought to bear upon them. Two columns of troops were permitted to enter the town, where they were at once cut to pieces by the furious Janissaries. The assault had been made at daybreak, and the struggle was maintained until six in the evening, when the Russians were compelled to retreat, leaving 8,000 of their number, in killed and wounded, in the ditch and around the walls. Of the latter, 4,000 were at once decapitated by the victorious Turks.

The Moslems failed to follow up their advantage, and the Russian general was thus allowed time to repair his disasters, and enable him to retain his position. Kamenskoi, who now commanded the Russians, made a grand attack on the Turkish camp on the 7th of September. The battle of Battin followed, during the first day of which the Russians suffered severely, and narrowly escaped a defeat. The Turks, intoxicated with their partial success, gave way to every demonstration of joy, and, in the sight of their foes, beheaded the wounded who had been left on the field. The following day the contest was renewed at dawn, the whole of the Russian artillery brought to bear upon the Turkish intrenched camp, and the victory finally remained with the Russians, who, in retaliation for the cruelty practised by the Turks, put all the wounded and prisoners to death. This success was followed by the capture of Sistowa, a fortified place in the neighbourhood;









*Entrance to the Proprietors from the Black, Ind.*  
*Paint from the same, American*



together with the whole Turkish flotilla, which had taken refuge under its walls. Roudschouck, also, which had been so bravely defended, was now compelled to capitulate; the pasha, his troops, and the inhabitants being allowed to retire, while the town, cannon, standards, and military stores fell to the victors. The campaign was concluded by the siege of Nicopolis, which capitulated to the Russians, who then, in consequence of the rainy season having set in, recrossed the Danube (with the exception of those left to garrison the towns they had captured), and took up their winter quarters in Wallachia and Moldavia.

During the early part of the winter, the Russian army was again reinforced; and, in consequence of the death of Kamenskoi, General Kutusoff was appointed to the chief command. However, the pacific connection between the emperors Napoleon and Alexander was in so precarious a state, that in the February of 1811, the latter gave orders for five divisions of the army to leave their winter-quarters on the Danube, and direct their march towards the Vistula, in Poland. The Russian army on the Danube, thus reduced to one-half of its former amount, was no longer able to carry on offensive operations. The Turks, encouraged by this reduction in the strength of their enemies, and roused by the dangers they had incurred in the preceding campaign, made the most vigorous efforts for the prosecution of the war, and trusted to regain all the strongholds they had lost on the right bank of the Danube. In this they were deceived; for the spirit of the Russians had not diminished, and they were now led by a general of great military talents.

Towards the end of June, Achmet Pasha advanced with 60,000 men, and seventy-eight pieces of artillery, against the Russians. General Kutusoff concentrated his troops, and took up his position in front of Roudschouck. There he was attacked by the Moslems on the 2nd of July, who, with wild shouts and eager fury, charged the Russian squares on three sides at once, at the same time that they were played upon by the Turkish batteries. This concentrated mode of attack had nearly secured the victory; for though the squares on the right withstood the shock, the centre suffered severely, while the third was nearly swept away by the torrent of Turkish cavalry which burst upon it. Four regiments of dragoons and Cossacks were charged in

flank by the Moslem cavalry, pierced through, and almost destroyed. Had the Moslem horse been supported by a competent body of infantry, they must have obtained a victory. Such was not the case; and these brave Asiatics were driven back by the deadly volleys of grapeshot from the batteries of the town. The Turks retired sullenly from the field after about 3,000 men had been killed or wounded on each side, and the Russians also withdrew within the walls of Roudschouck, which they shortly afterwards burnt and abandoned. Neither side obtained any advantage in this sanguinary battle, nor could either of them lay claim to a victory.

The Turks now crossed the Danube, and became the assailants. At first, success attended their efforts, and the Russians were so severely pressed, that it seemed probable they would be driven out of the Danubian provinces. In this state of affairs they were reinforced by a large body of Cossacks. General Kutusoff then, by some very able manœuvres, contrived to surround the Turkish army, and attack it in the rear. The Moslems were taken by surprise, and thrown into disorder. Their own cannon was turned against them, and used with terrible effect; and so desperate was their situation, that had the Russian general been less cautious, the whole Turkish army might have been destroyed. Its position, entirely surrounded, and subjected to an incessant cannonade, was perfectly desperate. Yet the Turkish general, with unshaken courage, refused the most advantageous offers of capitulation, and formed the audacious design of cutting his way, by a sudden irruption, through the Russian left, and intrenching himself under the shelter of the guns of Roudschouck. Fortunately for the Turks, Alexander, fearing the enmity of his recent friend Napoleon, was anxious for a peace. A convention, therefore, between the Russian cabinet and the Porte, with the object of adjusting their cause of quarrel, was concluded at Giurgevo at the end of October; and thus the misery of the Turkish army was terminated, and its honour saved. They capitulated on the 4th of December, on condition of abandoning their intrenched camp without their arms or cannon, which were to be restored to them if peace were concluded. This ended the campaign of 1811, in which both parties had made prodigious efforts, and neither had gained decisive success.



The negotiations which followed were earnestly pressed by Russia; for Alexander was, by this time, well aware of the formidable contest with Napoleon which was impending over him. This circumstance might have made the Turks less inclined to conclude a peace, especially as the French ambassador used every effort to induce them to continue the war. But they were made acquainted, by England, with the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, in which Napoleon had rewarded their friendship to him by not only agreeing to the partition of their European dominions, but had himself stipulated for the possession of Greece, the islands of the Archipelago, Albania, and Macedonia. Concurrent testimony of the treachery of Napoleon convinced the Porte of the imminent danger to which they would be exposed, if he obtained a similar supremacy in the east of Europe to that which he had so long exercised in the west.

The Turkish government, therefore, forbore to make the utmost of the necessity under which Russia lay of concluding the war. The Ottoman ministry saw, that if Napoleon subdued Russia, he would turn the forces of both empires against them, and that his possession of Moscow would be but a preliminary to the subjugation of Constantinople. They therefore consented to abandon the provinces conquered by Russia, in the beginning of the war, to the north of the Danube, and agreed that the river Pruth should form the boundary of the two empires. Thus, though Russia lost Moldavia and Wallachia, which Alexander, in the insolence of anticipated triumph, had declared annexed to the empire, she gained Bessarabia, a province which conferred on its holders the immense advantage of commanding the mouths of the Danube. The treaty was signed at Bucharest on the 28th of May, 1812, and was followed, on the 18th of July, by another, concluding peace with England. Sultan Mahmoud was, however, highly dissatisfied with this peace, which he regarded as disgraceful: so strong was his feeling on this point, that he even put a Turkish officer of distinction, who had been engaged in its negotiation, to death for having concealed certain facts which would have warranted the Porte in holding out for better terms. England made an

ungenerous use of Turkey, upon whom she brought all her influence to bear in favour of Russia, and thus enabled that power to withdraw advantageously from the war, in order that she might direct the whole of her energies against France. Had Russia been at war with Turkey on one side, and France on the other (especially if consideration be had to the state of those powers at the period), her position would have been one of no common danger.

"The vigorous and unlooked-for resistance," observes Alison, "which Turkey at this period opposed to all the efforts of that Russians, sufficiently illustrates the elements of strength which at that period lay dormant, till roused to present danger, in the Ottoman empire; and may perhaps suggest the necessity of modifying some of those opinions as to the declining condition of the power of the grand seignior, which have been so long received as political maxims in Europe. When it is recollected that Russia for three years directed her whole force against the Turks; that in the year 1810 she had a hundred thousand men upon the Danube; and that this array was composed of the conquerors of Eylau—it certainly appears not a little surprising, that the Ottoman empire was not altogether overthrown in the shock. Nevertheless, the contest was extremely equal; and though the forces with which the Ottomans had to contend on the Danube fully equalled those which fronted Napoleon on the Vistula, yet they opposed nearly as effectual resistance to the Muscovite arms, as did the conqueror of Western Europe. The contest began on the Danube, and it terminated, after three years' bloodshed, on the same river, with the loss of only one or two frontier towns to the Ottomans. This broad and decisive fact proves, that although the political power of Turkey has unquestionably declined for the last century and a-half, and the enormous abuses of its civil government have occasioned, during that period, a constant diminution in its inhabitants and strength, yet it still possesses great resources when they are fairly drawn forth by impending danger; and that in the native bravery of its inhabitants is often to be found, as in the British soldiers, more than a compensation for all the errors of their direction or government."



## CHAPTER L.

NAPOLEON ANNEXES THE DOMINIONS OF THE DUKE OF OLDENBURG TO THE FRENCH EMPIRE; DISSENSIONS BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND RUSSIAN EMPERORS; IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE HOSTILE ATTITUDE OF NAPOLEON, ALEXANDER PLACES HIS DOMINIONS IN A STATE OF DEFENCE, AND RELAXES THE "CONTINENTAL SYSTEM" WITH RESPECT TO ENGLISH COMMERCE; NAPOLEON INSULTS THE RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR; DRIVES SWEDEN INTO AN ALLIANCE WITH RUSSIA; MODERATION OF ALEXANDER; ENTHUSIASM IN FRANCE AT THE PROJECTED INVASION OF RUSSIA; POWERFUL NATIONALITY OF THE LATTER STATE, AND ITS PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE; NAPOLEON AT DRESDEN; HIS ADVANCE INTO POLAND; THE INVADING ARMY CROSS THE NIEMEN; PROCLAMATION OF ALEXANDER TO THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

IN the last chapter we advanced somewhat beyond our main narrative, in order to bring the events of the war with Turkey under one head. The friendship of Napoleon and Alexander endured for nearly five years, and no rupture of it had yet taken place. We have shown that a coldness had, nevertheless, arisen between these high-placed potentates; but the chief canker to Alexander, was his enforced adherence to the principle of excluding English commerce and manufactures from the continent. This had been productive of the most ruinous consequences to the trade of Russia, and had caused great dissatisfaction in that country. A system of connivance to evade the prohibition had naturally arisen; but this was merely an alleviation of the evil, which seriously oppressed the prosperity of the empire.

Such was the state of things when, in the December of 1810, Napoleon annexed to the French empire the dominions of the Duke of Oldenburg, who was related to Alexander by having married his sister Catherine. This unjust act of spoliation excited a feeling of irritability not only in the mind of the emperor, but in those of the inhabitants of St. Petersburg. Alexander, also, still felt an uneasiness respecting the grand-duchy of Warsaw, from which he feared that Napoleon might reconstruct the overthrown kingdom of Poland. The grand-duchy had been largely augmented with territory surrendered by Austria at the treaty of Vienna, in 1809; and the anxiety of Alexander induced him to open a negotiation on that subject with the French emperor. Napoleon at first consented to gratify his cooling friend on this point; and, early in 1810, he authorised the French ambassador at St. Petersburg to draw up a convention, in which it was expressly stipulated that the kingdom of Poland should never be re-established, and

that even the name of Poland should be effaced for ever from every public and official document. Alexander was gratified, and again expressed himself in the language of friendship towards the towering rival whom he secretly dreaded. Napoleon subsequently refused to ratify this convention, and proposed a suspicious alteration of its terms. Alexander felt such conduct to be a slight, and, in a conversation with the French ambassador, he remarked, "If affairs change, it is not my fault: I shall not be the first to disturb the peace of Europe. I will attack no one; but if they come to seek me, I shall defend myself." Napoleon, when pressed on this subject, answered in warm language; and the Russian cabinet conceived an apprehension that he meditated an attack on their Polish possessions. A new military levy was therefore ordered, of one man in every hundred throughout the Russian empire, and the Russian forces in Poland considerably increased.

Napoleon, through the medium of his ambassador, demanded an explanation of these preparations. Alexander responded with a dignified firmness. "You assert that I am arming," said he to M. de Caulaincourt; "and I am far from denying it. I am effectually armed; I am ready, quite ready; and you will find me prepared to defend myself to the utmost. What would you have thought of me if I had acted otherwise—if I had been so forgetful of my duty as to leave my country exposed to the prompt, exacting, and terrible will of your master? But I have only armed after receiving certain information that Dantzic is being placed in a state of defence; that its garrison is being augmented; that the troops of Marshal Davoust are being reinforced and concentrated; that the Poles and Saxons have been ordered to hold themselves in readiness; that Modlin and Thorn have



been repaired, and all the fortifications provisioned." Then, leading Caulaincourt into a cabinet, in which were spread open his maps, the emperor added—"On receiving this information, see what I have done. I have ordered defensive works, not in advance of, but behind my frontier; on the Dwina and the Dnieper, at Riga, at Dunaburg, at Balernisk; that is to say, at a distance from the Niemen almost as great as that which separates Strasburg from Paris. If your master should fortify Paris, should I complain of it? And when he carries his preparations so far in advance of his frontiers, should I be accused of provoking war because I arm myself behind mine? I have not such good generals as yours; I am not myself so good a soldier or administrator as Napoleon; but I have good soldiers and a devoted people; and we will perish sword in hand, rather than permit ourselves to be treated like the Dutch, or the people of Hamburg. At the same time, I declare to you, upon my honour, that I will not strike the first blow. I will let you pass the Niemen before I pass it myself. Believe me, when I say that I do not desire war; and that my nation, although hurt and terrified at your proceedings, does not desire it; but, if attacked, she will not recede."

Though Alexander was not disposed to make the seizure of the duchy of Oldenburg a cause of war with France, yet he thought it necessary in some way to resent what could not but be regarded as a slight to him as well as the spoliation of his relation. On the 31st of December, 1810, therefore, he issued an ukase, which prohibited the importation of various articles of French manufacture, and allowed that of colonial produce. This, in effect, was a material relaxation of the system of exclusion which had been carried on with respect to English commerce; as, under the pretence of carrying on a trade in the colonial produce of Russia, English merchants were able to effect extensive dealings with that country. A coast-guard of 80,000 men was established, under pretext of enforcing obedience to this edict; but, in reality, as a covert means of augmenting the regular army. Napoleon understood all this, and made constant preparations for the war which his own proceedings were rendering inevitable. He had aimed at isolating Russia from all other states, and making any other alliance than with France impos-

sible to her. On the 15th of August, 1811, he bantered Prince Kourakin, the Russian ambassador, for some time in the presence of several of his diplomatic compeers. Speaking of the recent war of Russia with Turkey, he said, with a provoking and insulting sarcasm, the more bitter on account of its truth—"If we are now dictating despatches, or writing for the journals, I will at once admit that your generals have been constantly victorious, and that it was the state of your finances which compelled you to withdraw a portion of your troops from living at the expense of the Turks, to make them live at the cost of the Russian treasury. But if we are speaking frankly before three or four of your colleagues, who know the real state of affairs, I will plainly tell you that you have been beaten; that your errors have caused you to lose the line of the Danube, and that its loss resulted less from the ill-advised manœuvres of your generals, than from the mistake of your government in depriving them of the necessary forces, by withdrawing five divisions from the Danube to the Dnieper. And why was this done? To make a demonstration against me, whom you call your ally! You have committed faults upon faults! If you have any cause of anger against me, you should openly declare it. In any case, instead of scattering your forces, you should have concentrated them against Turkey, so as to have overwhelmed it, and compelled it to a peace which should have been as advantageous as that of Finland, and then you would have been in a position to have taken precautionary measures against me. But in policy, finance, and war, you have committed a thousand errors; and for whom? For the Prince of Oldenburg and some contrabandists. For the sake of such persons it is that you have exposed yourselves to the risk of a war with me, whose resources you well know!" The emperor added—"I suppose you reckon upon having allies. Where are they? Is Austria one of them—Austria, with whom you were at war in 1809, and from whom you have taken a province at the conclusion of peace? Is Sweden one of them—Sweden, from whom you have taken Finland? Is Prussia one of them—Prussia, whose spoils you accepted at the peace of Tilsit, after having been her ally? You deceive yourselves; you will have no allies. Come to an understanding then with me, and let us have no war." This conversation, in which



Napoleon overwhelmed and greatly embarrassed the Russian ambassador, was much talked about, and formed a topic of conversation in all the saloons of Paris and St. Petersburg. "This new circumstance," said the emperor Alexander, with an air of sadness, "has but confirmed my nation in its resolution to defend its dignity and independence to the death. Napoleon would not have spoken thus, if he were not resolved upon war."

The French emperor had acted with great subtlety towards Russia, yet his own violence and domineering ambition threw an ally into her arms. This was Sweden, which Napoleon placed in the painful position of declaring war against England, or against himself. Bernadotte,\* who in accepting the dignity of crown prince of Sweden, had attached himself earnestly to its interests, protested and entreated, but was compelled to assent to this tyrannical dictation. In the November of 1810, Sweden declared war against England, which seeing its position, treated it with a generous forbearance. Napoleon was not yet satisfied; he made other demands upon the Swedish government, and acted in a manner so offensively overbearing, that it refused compliance. To punish it, Napoleon, in January, 1812, poured his troops into Pomerania, seized the fortress of Stralsund, confiscated the Swedish ships which he found in the harbour, and committed other unjustifiable acts of hostility. The limits of passive endurance were past: Sweden entered into an alliance with Russia, and concluded a peace with England.

Napoleon and Alexander each remained for a time in an attitude of defence, and occupied in preparing for that outbreak on which the former had determined; and the latter, though he desired to avoid, would not descend to avert by any undignified concession. The dangers to which Alexander was exposed, appear to have strengthened and purified his character, and he acted as a patriotic monarch should have done. Extremely averse to entering upon the war, he desired that the whole of Europe should see that he was not the aggressor. "The joy of England must be great," said he, "to see two such powers going to war." Even so late as the early part of the year 1812,

he made proposals to Napoleon, with the object of bringing about an accommodation; but the latter left them unanswered. He had resolved to make a grand display of his military power on the banks of the Vistula, and, if prevented by submission from conquering Russia, to show at least that he could overawe it.

The attention of the whole of Europe was fixed in suspense upon the approaching conflict between its two greatest powers, and most politicians anticipated that it would result in the final prostration of Russia. That empire was, indeed, seriously endangered; and it is not impossible that it might have been conquered and dismembered by the swords of France, had not Napoleon, intoxicated by long prosperity, attempted to finish in one campaign that which it must have taken several successful ones to accomplish. The expedition which Napoleon proposed for the conquest of Russia, was regarded with enthusiasm throughout France; and during the spring of 1812, the roads of that country and of Germany were thronged by cavalry, infantry, and artillery, hastening to the scene of the approaching conflict. "Young men," observes Alison, "of the richest and noblest families solicited employment in an expedition where success appeared certain, resistance impossible, and danger unlikely. All heads were swept away by the torrent; ambition, in every age and rank, was dazzled by the apparent brilliancy of the prospect. The expedition, said they, which is preparing, will throw that of Egypt into the shade. Never had the instinct of war, the passion for military glory, more strongly seconded the ambition of the chief of an empire. 'We are setting out for Moscow, but we shall soon return,' were the words with which the joyous youth everywhere took leave of their parents, their relations, their friends. The march to St. Petersburg or Moscow, seemed only a military promenade—a hunting party of six months' duration, in which little danger was to be met, but ample excitement experienced; a last effort, which would place the empire of Napoleon and the glory of France beyond the reach of danger. The magnificence of the spectacle, and the brilliancy of the prospect, spread these feelings even amongst the

\* Bernadotte, though a Frenchman, and one of Napoleon's marshals, had been elected by the Swedish Diet as the successor of Charles XIII., the reigning sovereign, who was without natural heirs.

Bernadotte was much respected by the Swedes, who, moreover, thought that by selecting him as their future sovereign, they would secure the friendship and protection of the French emperor.



people of the vanquished states: the expected restoration of Poland, and humiliation of Russia, gave an air of romance to the approaching expedition; and thousands breathed wishes for its success."

In Russia, the intense nationality of its nobles and its people was aroused, and they rallied loyally around their emperor. He and his counsellors were at times elated with the hope, that the apparently irresistible foe, who had gathered for their destruction such a power as Europe had never before seen, might be baffled by the difficulties of carrying out an offensive war into the heart of Russia; at others, they cherished the mournful resolution of perishing in the defence of their country, rather than any confident hope of being able to achieve its deliverance.

But the chief hope of the Russians lay in the vast extent of their empire, which it was impossible to overrun; and the severity of its climate, which rendered it inaccessible to invaders, except for a comparatively brief period of the year. The plan devised by the Russians was, therefore, to lay waste their country in the path of the enemy, and then, retiring into the farthest part of the empire, see how the dreaded Napoleon would be able to maintain an enormous army in the midst of desolated plains, equally deficient in food for his soldiers, and forage for his horses. They conceived the hope, that, like another Pharaoh, he would perish in the vastness of the desert, as did the Egyptians in the vastness of the deep. Clouds of light horse were to harass the flanks of the enemy, and cut off its foraging parties; the forces of Russia were to decline battles, and to retreat into the interior of the empire to avoid them, only pausing to fight when the French should be exhausted with hunger and fatigue. By this means it was hoped that the vast armies of Napoleon would be gradually wasted away. Some of Alexander's officers even advised that the desert should be carried forward, and that for this purpose, they should invade Poland and Old Prussia, and then retreat after having destroyed their rich granaries and laid the country desolate; but to this proposition he would not consent.

The forces collected by the emperor

\* Barclay de Tolly was descended from a Scotch family, a younger branch of which had migrated to Livonia. He had entered the Russian army at the almost infantine age of twelve, and had risen by his military merits to the highest rank in the service. His admirers estimate him as the greatest general

Alexander, to oppose those of Napoleon, consisted of 260,000 men, divided into two armies; one under the command of General Barclay de Tolly,\* and the other under that of Prince Bagration. These were, as the war proceeded, swelled by the addition of the army from the Danube, and by other reinforcements.

The force Napoleon had collected for the invasion of Russia, was the most tremendous accumulation of armed men, that had been formed in modern times, or, probably, since the beginning of the world. It amounted to 587,000 men: of whom 270,000 were French; 80,000 Germans of the confederation of the Rhine; 30,000 Poles; 30,000 Austrians; 20,000 Prussians; and the remainder chiefly natives of the various Italian states. The emperor of Austria, though now the father-in-law of Napoleon, contributed his contingent with an unwillingness he did not deem it prudent to show; while the ruined monarch of Prussia, who bitterly hated his oppressor, had no choice in the matter, but was compelled to send his troops into the field, to fight against the side to which he wished success. Indeed, Frederic William was aware, that if Napoleon subdued Russia, Prussia, as a state, would disappear from the map of Europe; but he was now as powerless to resist the will of his conqueror, as is the straw or bubble to contend against the current of the stream on whose bosom it is swept rapidly onward.

Despite the general enthusiasm which prevailed in France respecting this expedition, it was viewed with alarm by some of its profoundest statesmen, and also by many of its chief military men. Talleyrand exhausted his utmost efforts to dissuade his imperious master from it; but in vain. It is said that he even predicted the overthrow of the French empire as its result. The astute Fouché also presented a memorial to Napoleon, with the desire of inducing him to forego a design which he felt would lead to ruin. The emperor received it with a haughty coldness. "War with Russia," he remarked, "it would seem, pleases you as little as that in Spain." Fouché replied, that he hoped to be pardoned for having thrown together some reflections upon so important a crisis. "It is no crisis at all, of Russia after Suwarrow. Prince Bagration was descended from the ancient princes of Georgia, and was a brave, impetuous soldier, who loved the excitement of danger. To the Russian minister Balachoff, Napoleon observed, "Bagration is your only general."



sir," resumed the emperor, "but a mere war of politics. Spain falls whenever I have destroyed English influence at St. Petersburg. I have 800,000 soldiers in readiness; with such an army, I consider Europe as an old prostitute who must obey my pleasure. Did not you yourself once tell me that the word *impossible* is not French? You grandees are now grown too rich; and though you pretend to be anxious about my interests, you are only thinking of what might happen to yourselves, in the event of my death, and the dismemberment of my empire. I regulate my conduct much more by the sentiments of my army, than by yours. Is it my fault that the height of power which I have attained, compels me to ascend to the dictatorship of the world? My destiny is not yet accomplished. The picture exists hitherto only in outline. There must be one code, one court of appeal, and one coinage, for all Europe. The European states must be melted into one nation, and Paris be its capital. I will destroy all Russian influence, as well as all English influence in Europe. Two battles will do the business; the emperor Alexander will come to me on his knees, and Russia shall be disarmed. Spain costs me very dear: without that, I should have been master of the world by this time; but when I shall become such, by finishing with Russia, my son will have nothing to do but quietly to retain my place."

On the 9th of May, 1812, Napoleon quitted Paris and proceeded to Dresden, to which city his progress was one prolonged festivity, or triumphal march. He had expressed a wish that the emperor of Austria, and the minor kings and princes of Germany, should meet him there. He imagined that so brilliant an assemblage of sovereigns, would contrast with the insulated state of the Russian monarch, and produce in him an alarming sense of being generally deserted. Either from motives of interest or fear, his desire was obeyed, and Dresden became the scene of a gorgeous munificence, the description of which reads like some creation of a warm imagination. As at Erfurth, the most gifted actors of Paris combined their talents, and plays were performed, of which the passages descriptive of heroes and illustrious princes, were all applied to the soldier-monarch. Maria

Louisa had accompanied her imperial partner to Dresden. Around her was cast the whole gorgeousness of rank and wealth, in their greatest distinction and most wild profusion. A modern historian observes—"During the magnificent series of pageants which followed her arrival, flattery exhausted its talent, and luxury its magnificence; and the pride of the Cæsars was forgotten in the glory of one who had risen upon the ruins of their antiquated splendour." But it was the great soldier himself who was the chief attraction of these brilliant scenes. General Count Ségur\* says—"Whole nations had quitted their homes to throng his path; rich and poor, nobles and plebeians, friends and enemies, all hurried to the scene. Their curious and anxious groups were seen crowding together in the streets, the roads, and the public places; they passed whole days and nights with their eyes fixed on the gate and windows of his palace. It was not his crown, his rank, the splendour of his court, but him only, on whom they desired to feast their eyes. It was a memento of his features which they were anxious to obtain; they wished to be able to tell their less fortunate countrymen and posterity, that they had seen Napoleon."

The emperor remained at Dresden until the 29th of May, living in a style of the most gorgeous pomp, and distributing, with more than Eastern munificence, diamonds, snuff-boxes and crosses, among the crowd of princes, ministers, dukes, and courtiers who thronged around his steps. He then led his enormous host into Poland, where he was soon assailed by the piteous complaints of the peasantry, whom his soldiers pillaged without mercy. The cavalry cut down the green rye, and even stripped the houses of their thatch, in order to find provender for their horses. Napoleon expressed himself hurt by these proceedings, and addressed severe reproaches to those princes or generals who sanctioned them. But the depredations continued, for they soon became necessary. The means of providing such a multitude with food, had been considered as far as was possible. An army of provision-waggon was to be loaded from the magazines established on the Vistula: but partly because the vehicles were too heavy for the soil they were intended to traverse, and partly from an inefficient organ-

\* *History of the Expedition to Russia*; by General Count Philip de Ségur, son of the French ambassador, at the court of Catherine II.; to whose writings

we have previously referred. The son was one of Napoleon's favourite generals, and accompanied him in the fatal invasion of Russia.



isation on this point, most of them were left behind before reaching that river. Contributions were, therefore, made on the peasantry, who were speedily ruined by the extent of these exactions, enforced by troops from whom they expected deliverance from their bondage to Russia.

Before daybreak on the 23rd of June, the invading army approached the river Niemen. Leaving his carriage, Napoleon mounted his horse, and reconnoitred the Russian river. As he came up to the bank, his horse suddenly fell and threw him on the sand. Some one observed, "This is a bad omen; a Roman would recoil!" But the emperor, rising unconcerned, gave orders for the construction of three bridges, and retired to his quarters humming a tune. The next morning, the emperor issued the following address to his army, by whom it was received with the most ardent enthusiasm:—"Soldiers! the second Polish war has commenced. The first ended at Friedland and at Tilsit. At Tilsit, Russia swore an eternal alliance with France, and war with England. She now violates her oaths. She will give no explanation of her capricious conduct until the French eagles have repassed the Rhine; by that means leaving our allies at her mercy. Russia is hurried away by fatality; her destiny must be accomplished. Does she imagine us to be degenerated? Are we not still the soldiers of Austerlitz? She places us between war and dishonour; the choice cannot be doubtful. Let us advance then—let us cross the Niemen, and carry the war into her own territory. The second Polish war will be as glorious for the French arms as the first; but the peace we shall this time conclude, will carry with it its own guarantee, and put an end to the fatal influence which, for fifty years, Russia has exercised in the affairs of Europe."

After this address had been read to the soldiers, the signal to advance was given. The vast columns of the imperial army defiled out of the forests and hollows on the banks of the river, and commenced their passage over to the Russian side; which continued incessantly during the 24th and the 25th. They met with no opposition; and, indeed, not a foe was to be seen. Some of the officers fancied that they heard the distant report of cannon, and listened attentively to ascertain from what direction it came. But this was but the work of imagination: scarcely, however, had Napoleon

himself crossed the river, than the day, which had been brilliant, became overcast; a wind arose, and a thunder-storm burst and rolled over the army. Black and heavy masses of clouds poured out their contents for several hours, and the roads and fields were inundated. Many there were, even amongst the most enthusiastic, who felt terrified at what they conceived to be a fatal presage.

Alexander had left St. Petersburg on the 21st of April, and joined his army. When intelligence of the passage of the Niemen by the French reached him, he was at a ball at the country-house of General Benningsen, in the neighbourhood of Wilna. For some time he remained with the company without exhibiting any change of manner, or communicating the intelligence he had received. He then wrote and issued the following proclamation to the empire:—"For long we have observed the hostile proceedings of the French emperor towards Russia, but we always entertained the hope of avoiding hostilities by measures of conciliation; but, seeing all our efforts without success, we have been constrained to assemble our armies. Still we hoped to maintain peace by resting on our frontiers in a defensive attitude, without committing any act of aggression. All these conciliatory measures have failed; the emperor Napoleon, by a sudden attack on our troops at Kowno, has declared war. Seeing, therefore, that nothing can induce him to remain at peace, all that remains for us is to invoke the succour of the Most High, and oppose our forces to the enemy. I need not remind the officers and soldiers of their duty, to excite their valour; the blood of the brave Slavonians flows in their veins. Soldiers! you will defend your religion, your country, and your liberty. I am with you. God is against the aggressor." The emperor also announced the invasion of the country to the governor of St. Petersburg, in a letter which concluded with these patriotic and resolute observations:—"I have the fullest confidence in the zeal of my people and the bravery of my soldiers. Menaced in their homes, they will defend them with their wonted firmness and intrepidity. Providence will bless our just cause. The defence of our country, of our independence and national honour, have forced me to unsheathe the sword. I will not return it to the scabbard so long as a single enemy remains on the Russian territory."



The nationality and patriotism of the Russian people and soldiers needed not these addresses to excite them. The latter even received with regret the command to retire before the enemy, who was advancing with rapid strides upon Wilna, the capital of Lithuania. But the policy of the Russians in retiring and leaving the country waste behind them, was indisputably a wise one. To have immediately encountered the invaders, would have been to be overwhelmed beneath their immense numerical superiority. The obstacles which nature had placed in the country against invasion, were silently yet terribly telling in favour of the Russians. The waste of active warfare had already commenced its work upon the French army. In consequence of incessant rains and fatigues, and unwholesome provender, 10,000 horses dropt and died on the road from the Niemen to Wilna; while shortly after the arrival of the invaders at that city, and even before a shot was fired,

25,000 sick and dying men filled its hospitals, and the surrounding villages.

At Wilna Napoleon received a letter from Alexander, in which the latter, animated by a spirit of forbearance which was scarcely to be expected, wrote, "that it was not yet too late to negotiate; that a war was begun which the soil, the climate, and the character of Russia rendered interminable, but that all accommodation had not become impossible; and that from opposite banks of the Niemen they might yet come to an understanding." It was already impossible for Napoleon to retire to the other side of the Niemen, without utterly losing the *prestige* that attached to him as a great general. Therefore he felt irritated at the proposal, and replied—"I will treat of peace at Wilna, and retire behind the Niemen when it is concluded." The time of negotiation was, in fact, long gone by; and the quarrel between these two powerful potentates, could only be settled by an appeal to the sword.

## CHAPTER LI.

ENGAGEMENTS BETWEEN THE RETIRING RUSSIANS AND THE ADVANCED GUARD OF THE FRENCH; ALEXANDER APPEALS TO THE NOBLES AND PEOPLE OF MOSCOW; THEIR ENTHUSIASTIC PATRIOTISM; ASSAULT ON SMOLENSK, AND DESPERATE DEFENCE OF THAT CITY; THE RUSSIANS CONTINUE THEIR RETREAT; CLAMOURS OF THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE POLICY OF A CONSTANT FLIGHT FROM THE ENEMY; BATTLE OF VALTELINA; FRIGHTFUL CONDITION OF THE FRENCH ARMY; GENERAL KUTUSOFF APPOINTED TO THE CHIEF COMMAND OF THE RUSSIANS; THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE BATTLE OF BORODINO; THE RUSSIANS CONTINUE THEIR RETREAT; THE FRENCH ENTER MOSCOW, AND FIND IT DESERTED.

NAPOLEON committed the serious error of remaining for seventeen days at Wilna; a circumstance which permitted the Russians to retire in excellent order. The officers nearest to the person of the emperor remarked to each other, that a genius so vast as his, and always increasing in activity and audacity, was no longer seconded by a vigorous constitution. They were surprised at finding him affected by the heat of a burning atmosphere; and they remarked to each other, with melancholy forebodings, the tendency to corpulence which his frame had acquired, and which they regarded as the forerunner of premature decay.

The division of the Russian army, under the command of Prince Bagration, was sharply followed by that of the French,

under Jerome Buonaparte and Marshal Davoust; and on the 9th and 10th of July, engagements took place between the advanced guard and cavalry of each. These terminated rather in favour of the Russians; but the latter wisely continued their retreat. On the 23rd of July, an obstinate conflict between the same forces took place at Mohilow; on the Dnieper, in which each side lost about 3,000 men; after which Bagration again retired in excellent order, and joined the main army under Barclay de Tolly, at Smolensk, on the 3rd of August.

The emperor Alexander had left the army on the 16th of July, and hastened to Moscow; to which city the efforts of the enemy were evidently directed. His object was to stimulate by his presence the patriotic ex-



ertions of its inhabitants. He was received by all classes with a frenzy of enthusiasm; and having caused the chief nobles and merchants to be summoned to meet him within the ancient walls of the Kremlin, he promised to have recourse to the extremest measures, rather than lay down his arms. "Never," said he, "was danger more urgent. The national religion, the throne, the state, can be preserved only by the greatest sacrifices. May the destruction with which we are threatened recoil upon the head of the invader, and may Europe, freed from the yoke of servitude, have cause to bless the name of Russia!" The emperor also issued an earnest proclamation to the people, in which he said—"We invite all classes to a general armament, in order to co-operate with ourselves against the desigus of the enemy. Let him find at every step the faithful sons of Russia ready to combat all his forces, and deaf to all his seductions; despising his fraud, trampling under foot his gold; paralysing, by the heroism of true valour, all the efforts of his legions of slaves. Illustrious nobles! in every age you have been the saviours of your country: holy clergy! by your prayers you have always invoked the divine blessing on the arms of Russia: people! worthy descendants of the brave Slavonians, often have you broken the jaws of the lions which were open to devour you! Unite, then, with the cross in your hearts and the sword in your hands, and no human power shall prevail against you." The people of Moscow enthusiastically responded by raising a levy of ten out of every hundred males, and promising to clothe and arm them at their own expense. The merchants also made an enormous contribution in money to promote the national defences—an example which was followed by many other cities and provinces in the empire.

Napoleon and the centre of the French army advanced from Wilna on the 16th of July, with the intention of turning a fortified camp the Russians had erected at Drissa. The emperor, however, soon learned, that discovering it to be untenable, they had abandoned it, and were marching towards Witepsk, which they reached on the 25th. Thither Barclay de Tolly was followed by Napoleon; and on the evening of the 27th, the soldiers on both sides anticipated a mortal struggle on the following day. But General Barclay had not yet been joined by Prince Bagration; who, he

learnt, was directing his march towards Smolensk. Barclay, therefore, silently decamped during the night; and on the following morning the French were surprised to find the camp of the enemy so utterly deserted, that not even a baggage-waggon or a straggler, with the exception of a single Russian soldier found asleep under a bush, had been left behind. The invaders were so exhausted with the rapidity of their progress, under a burning summer's sun, that it was found imperative to pause at this point. "Here I stop," exclaimed Napoleon: "here I must look around me; rally, refresh my army, and organise Poland. The campaign of 1812 is finished; that of 1813 will do the rest."

He was, however, too restless to adhere to this resolution, especially as he frequently received intelligence concerning the prodigious preparations of Alexander in the interior of the empire. Napoleon, therefore, held a military council, to consider the expediency of a further advance. Several of his generals were extremely adverse to this, as fraught with great hazard. Berthier dissuaded him even with tears. The emperor overruled their objections. "Why," he exclaimed, "should we remain at Witepsk? The vicinity of the rivers, indeed, makes it a defensible position in summer; but in winter what would avail their frozen streams? If they remained there, it would be requisite to construct towns and fortresses capable of defying the elements; while at Moscow all would be ready-made to their hands." He added, that he perceived that their thoughts were dwelling on Charles XII.; but that if the expedition to Moscow wanted a fortunate precedent, it was because it had wanted a man capable of undertaking it; that in war, fortune went for one-half in everything; and that if people always waited for a complete assemblage of favourable circumstances, nothing would ever be undertaken. "No blood has yet been shed," he observed; "and Russia is too powerful to yield without fighting. Alexander can only negotiate after a great battle. If it is necessary, I will even proceed to the holy city in search of that battle; and I will gain it. Peace waits for me at the gates of Moscow."

Notwithstanding the sufferings of his troops, who were perishing by thousands from disease and hunger, Napoleon resolved to continue his march. He abandoned Witepsk on the 13th of August, and on the



16th came in sight of Smolensk and the united Russian armies, under Barclay de Tolly and Prince Bagration. At this sight, Napoleon, transported with joy, exclaimed—"At length I have them!" He was again deceived. Barclay de Tolly, instead of risking a battle to save Smolensk, thought it sufficient to protect the flight of the inhabitants, and to empty the magazines. Having done this, the Russian army continued its retreat. General Newcrosskoi, and a body of Russian troops, amounting to 30,000 men, which had already fought an heroic action with the French cavalry near Krasnoi, remained in the town and covered the retreat of the main army. Napoleon, irritated that his foes had again escaped him, ordered an assault on the city. It was defended by 200 pieces of heavy cannon, which kept up such a storm of fire against the assailants, that, unable to breach its massy walls, they were compelled eventually to retire. The Russians then set fire to Smolensk, and secured their retreat under cover of the dark columns of smoke which rose from the burning city. The loss on both sides was very heavy. It is variously estimated; but French and Russians probably had each of them, in killed and wounded, no less than 10,000 men.

In the meantime, Alexander, leaving Moscow, hurried to St. Petersburg, and thence to Orebro, in Sweden, where he concluded a treaty of alliance with England; by which the latter agreed to furnish a subsidy of £800,000, and stipulated, that if the Russian fleet was endangered by the French invasion, it should be removed, as a measure of security, to the British shores. On the 20th of June, Alexander also contracted an offensive and defensive alliance with the supreme junta of Spain. On the 21st, he had an interview at Abo with Bernadotte, the crown prince of Sweden. By an alliance concluded with him, it was arranged, that the Russian army which had been kept on the frontiers of Finland to guard against an outbreak from the Swedes, should be at liberty to be used against the French. As a return, Alexander, untaught by the tribulation suspended over his own head, promised, as a compensation for the loss of Finland, to join Sweden in wresting Norway from Denmark. During the interview of Alexander with Bernadotte, the news arrived of Napoleon's entry into Smolensk. "Should St. Petersburg itself be taken," exclaimed the emperor, "I will

retire into Siberia; I will there resume our ancient customs, and, like our long-bearded ancestors, will return anew to conquer the empire." "This resolution," exclaimed Bernadotte, with more enthusiasm than reason, "will liberate Europe."

The abandonment of Smolensk was regarded by the Russian soldiers and people rather as an act of pusillanimity than of prudence; and a violent clamour was raised against Barclay de Tolly, whose foreign extraction was not forgotten. They declared him to be a traitor, who permitted all their divisions to be destroyed piecemeal, and dishonoured the army by an interminable flight. "Why employ this stranger?" said the people; "was not Kutusoff, the comrade and rival of Suwarrow, yet living? A Russian was wanted to save Russia."

The Russian army was again divided; and the troops under Barclay had, from motives of an erroneous policy, taken the road to St. Petersburg; while that under Bagration was retreating by the Moscow-road. Napoleon sent his pursuing columns in both of these directions. On the 19th of August, Marshal Ney, with three divisions of the French army, attacked the Russian rear-guard at Valtelina, which Barclay had stationed there to cover a cross-movement from the St. Petersburg to the Moscow-road; which he saw to be imperative, unless he would allow the French to cut the Russian forces in two, and beat them in detail. The troops engaged were at first inconsiderable in number; but they were gradually strengthened on both sides, until the engagement swelled into an extensive battle, in which, altogether, 30,000 men were engaged. This was carried on with obstinate bravery; for the Russians fought to defend their cannon, wounded, and baggage; and the French with the hope of taking them. The French made repeated charges with the bayonet; but were as constantly driven back by the stolid bravery of the Russians. The contest was continued until night, and then ceased, from the exhaustion of the assailants. Neither side obtained any advantage; but the Russians retained their position; and victory may be regarded as rather favouring them than their adversaries, though both sides laid claim to it. The French lost about 8,000 men, amongst whom was that distinguished soldier General Gudin; and the Russians 6,000. The result might have been far



more favourable to the French, but for the indecision of General Junot; who, alarmed by an overwhelming sense of responsibility, remained in inaction. Napoleon was so irritated in consequence, that he threatened to dismiss him from the army. At the dawn of the following day, Napoleon visited the battle-field; and was astonished at the energy with which his troops must have fought, judging from the number and attitudes of the dead. They lay mingled with the Russians, amidst the stumps of broken trees, on ground trampled by the feet of the combatants, furrowed with balls, strewed with the fragments of weapons, tattered garments, scattered limbs, dead or wounded horses, and carriages overthrown. The emperor was compelled to pass over or tread upon carcasses, broken weapons, and bayonets twisted by the violence of the shock. The battalions of General Gudin were melted down to platoons; their clothes yet smelt of burnt cartridges and powder, and their faces were begrimed with smoke. Napoleon experienced a sense of grateful admiration for these brave men, who had fought their last battle. "With such troops," he exclaimed, "you might conquer the world. This is the most glorious of our fields; the dead have won immortal glory!"

Notwithstanding his apparent cheerfulness, which sustained the spirits of his troops, the emperor was occasionally oppressed with forebodings of evil. The enemy fled before him, and could not be brought to a decisive engagement. He was pushing forward over desolate tracts, laid waste by the retiring Russians; or through dark forests intersected by swampy streams or rocky dells. The spirits of the troops were oppressed by the solitude around them, and the sufferings they had to endure. The losses already sustained by hunger, fatigue, and sickness, had been tremendous. Typhus fever and dysentery had swept off thousands; and what remained of Smolensk was but one vast hospital. Provisions were scarce, and many soldiers suffered severely from the intemperate use of a spirit distilled from grain, and mingled with the juice of narcotic plants. Numbers of those who, debilitated by fatigue and want of proper food, had indulged in it, were seized with dizziness, stupefaction, and torpor. In this state they sat or lay down in the ditches or on the roads, their half-open, watery, and lack-lustre eyes fixed on vacancy, until their exhausted frames succumbed, and they expired

sullenly and without a groan. The convents of Smolensk which had escaped the flames, had been converted into hospitals, and were the scene of frightful horrors; while around the ramparts of the city was such an accumulation of corpses, that they infected the air, and increased the sickness which was devastating the invading army. Napoleon's generals took care that he should be well acquainted with these matters; for most of them dreaded this advance into so vast and sterile a territory. The emperor, however, decided on advancing, in the hope of eclipsing the sufferings of his troops by the brilliancy of a great battle. "The condition of the army," said he, "is frightful; I know it. At Wilna one-half were stragglers; now they amount to two-thirds. There is not a moment to lose; we must grasp at peace, and it can be only found at Moscow. Besides, the state of the army is such, as to render a halt impossible: constant advance alone keeps it together: you may lead it forward, but you cannot arrest its movement. We have advanced too far to retreat. If I sought but for military glory, I should have nothing to do but to return to Smolensk, and extend my wings on either side, so as to crush Wittgenstein and Formasoff. These operations would be brilliant; they would form a glorious termination to the campaign; but they would not conclude the war. Peace is before us. We have only to march eight days to obtain it. So near is our object, it is impossible to deliberate: let us advance to Moscow."

The emperor continued to advance upon that city; and the Russians, under Barclay de Tolly, to fall back in good order before him. That general, stung by the reproaches of the Russians, had at length resolved on giving battle to the French, when the emperor Alexander, yielding to the outcry against him, deprived him of the command, and gave it to General Kutusoff; who, as the pupil of Suwarrow, was pointed out by the army and the people as the person most fit to hold it. This man, who had restored the fortunes of Russia in the last campaign against the Turks, is thus described by M. Thiers:—"Although seventy years of age, so perfectly worn out by war and pleasure as to be scarcely capable of holding himself on his horse, thoroughly corrupt, false, perfidious, and a liar, he was possessed of consummate prudence, and had the art to make himself the idol of the party which was ardent for the plan of









THE BATTLE OF MIDDLETOWN.

THE LONDON ENGRAVING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED.



engaging, whilst he was himself the decided partisan of the system of retreat. And no man could be more capable than he was of gaining the mastery over men's minds, of directing them as he chose, of ruling them by affecting passions which he had not, and of opposing Napoleon by patience—the only arm with which he could be successfully fought."

Kutusoff was, however, compelled to assent to give battle to the French, on account of the near approach of the latter towards Moscow. He therefore halted on the plain of Borodino, which had been selected as offering many advantages to an army acting on the defensive. Napoleon announced to his troops that they were on the eve of a great battle, and allowed two days for rest and for the collection of provisions. He knew the necessity of terminating, if possible, this wearisome struggle by a decisive contest; for every day told upon his jaded troops, who now suffered so much from want of water, that the men sometimes dropped dead while in search of it, from the effects of exhaustion and thirst.

On the 5th of September, the French army came in sight of the Russians, drawn up in order of battle at Borodino, and defended by some hastily-erected intrenchments and redoubts; one of the latter, of great size, standing on a height which commanded the whole plain in front of the army. It was defended by 10,000 Russians, and supported by twelve pieces of heavy artillery. Napoleon gave orders for the attack of this redoubt, as he well knew its immense importance in the coming encounter. The task of taking it was assigned to the fiery Murat; and after a frightful and most sanguinary struggle it was captured. The Russians returning to the attack, cut down the troops who had entered it; and the redoubt was three times taken and retaken in the course of the evening; but at night it remained in the hands of the French.

The next day was occupied in preparations; and, by a kind of mutual consent, it had been allowed to pass by without even the discharge of a musket. Over each army reigned a portentous calm, like that which precedes great tempests. The French passed the day in repose, and indulged in cheerful discourse. Sustained by the love of military glory, they felt no doubt but that they were going to obtain a great victory, and to enter Moscow with their

invincible leader. Feelings of a far different kind prevailed in the Russian camp. Gloomy, exasperated, resolved to fight to the death, having no hope but in the assistance of heaven and the saints, the troops were on their knees in the midst of a thousand flambeaux, before a miraculous image of the Madonna of Smolensk—saved, it was said, on the wings of angels from the conflagration of that unfortunate city, and now carried in procession by the Greek priests through the bivouacs of the camp of Borodino. At the same time, General Kutusoff—who, so far from believing in the miraculous image, scarcely believed in the existence of the Deity—accompanied the procession with his head uncovered, his eyes fixed on the ground, and surrounded by his staff. He afterwards issued a proclamation to the soldiers, appealing to their fanaticism, and abusing the French emperor, whom he called a reptile, and an arch-rebel against all laws, both human and divine.

Napoleon passed the night in a state of sleepless anxiety, for he entertained apprehensions that his weak and famished soldiers might be physically unequal to sustain the shock of encounter with their furious enemies. He contemplated a fearful struggle; and observed, that a great day was at hand, and that the battle would be a terrible one. During the whole night he suffered much from illness. Fatigue, care, and anxious expectation, had worn him out. The chilliness of the atmosphere had struck to him; while fever, a dry cough, and excessive thirst, distressed him. He also laboured under an attack of an old and painful disorder, of a kind very depressing to the spirits. At five in the morning he mounted his horse, and advancing towards the group of officers who waited his approach, took a survey of the Russian position.

The French army then with the emperor consisted of 133,000 men, who brought into the field 590 pieces of cannon. The Russian force was estimated at 132,000 men, assisted by 640 pieces of artillery. Thus the forces on each side were nearly equal; for although the French were superior in discipline to the Russians, they were in a far inferior physical condition. At six in the morning the battle commenced by the advance of the French columns, under Davoust, against the Russian left wing. They were received with so severe a fire, that



several of the French generals were killed, and others wounded—a circumstance which created some hesitation in their ranks. They shortly rallied; and Kutusoff, seeing that the left wing was in danger of giving way before them, ordered up considerable reinforcements to its support.

Marshal Ney then received orders to support the left of Davoust, by attacking the redans in that part of the enemy's line. Ney's three divisions advanced to the charge, preceded by 70 pieces of cannon, and endeavoured to take the heights of Semenowskoi, which became the principal object of contention. After four hours passed in sanguinary fighting, in which success had favoured first one side and then the other, Ney sent to the emperor and desired assistance. Napoleon, perceiving that the Russians still retained the heights, resolved on a grand attack. He therefore sent the young guard, together with Murat and a large body of his cavalry, to the support of Davoust and Ney; while 400 pieces of cannon were brought to bear upon the redoubts. Under cover of a tremendous fire from the latter, immense columns of infantry and cavalry advanced to the assault. A terrible carnage took place, and continued for about an hour, when the Russians were compelled to retire from the contested heights; which, however, they did in good order.

During this time an obstinate conflict was carried on in the centre, where the Russians were driven from the village of Borodino; but General Barclay de Tolly and Prince Bagration succeeded in retaking the great redoubt, which, on the evening of the 5th, had fallen into the hands of the French. Yet, after a murderous struggle, it was again recaptured by the latter. During the contest for this position, many distinguished French officers perished. As Murat was speaking to General Galichet, a bullet whistled between them. "Not a very safe position this," said the fearless king, with a smile. "But we will remain in it, nevertheless," was the intrepid reply. At the same moment the Russian cuirassiers poured down *en masse*, and the French division had scarcely time to form into two squares, connected by a line of artillery. Murat took the command of one of them, and Galichet of the other; and during a quarter of an hour they received, with the most imperturbable coolness, the furious charges of the Russian cavalry.

The Russian soldiers who had been

charged with the defence of the redoubt, desperately refused quarter at the hands of their assailants, and nearly all perished in the assault. Trusting to profit by this success, General Grouchy led his cavalry against the chasseurs of the Russian guard, who drove them back with severe loss. This encouraged General Kutusoff to make a forward movement, with the hope of re-occupying the ground on which his army had stood, in the centre, at the beginning of the action. Large bodies of Russian infantry and cavalry advanced on this errand under a fearful fire, which the French directed upon them from the batteries they had erected on the captured heights. By several gallant charges, the Russians even recaptured some of the redoubts from which they had been driven; but they were speedily retaken; and Kutusoff, wearied of exposing his troops to a profitless butchery, at length recalled them.

Still this terrible battle lasted until night, by which time the Russians were everywhere driven from their original position, but were ranged in unbroken ranks in another to the rear of it. During the day, Napoleon showed an irresolution, which many of his officers believed deprived him of the advantages of a decided victory. Several portions of the French reserve had been brought into action; but the imperial guard, amounting to 20,000 men, remained in the rear. The position of the Russians was such, that it was presumed a final shock, directed against them obliquely, might have thrown them into disorder. But the French were exhausted by the fatigue and carnage of the day: the men could scarcely handle their arms, or the cavalry remain upon their horses; even the sabres were bent and blunted by repeated strokes. Napoleon saw that the contest could not be carried on with men so unlike their usual selves; and he would not endanger his guard. "At a distance of 800 leagues from France," said he, "it would scarcely be wise to risk our last remaining reserve." The French fell back to the ground they had occupied before the battle, and the sun sunk upon this terrible scene of slaughter.

This fearful 7th of September is now memorable as the date of the most gigantic and sanguinary battle recorded in the annals of modern history. The loss on each side was frightful. Of the Russians, 15,000 were killed, and 30,000 wounded: amongst the former was the brave soldier, Prince



Bagration; while the latter included thirty generals of distinction. Very few were taken prisoners; and it was by the number of these that the French had been accustomed to judge of the extent of a victory. They knew that a multitude of dead was rather a proof of the courage of the enemy, than an evidence of decided success. The loss of the French can scarcely be regarded as inferior to that of the foe whom they claimed to have beaten. No less than forty-three French generals were killed or wounded; while the total loss was 12,000 in killed and 38,000 wounded! An awful result; the more so as the battle was not a decisive one. The trophies of victory were also nearly equal; the French took thirteen pieces of cannon from their enemies, who also captured ten from them.

Murat exclaimed, "That in this great day he had not recognised the genius of Napoleon!" Such was the common feeling among the French generals; and at night there were no manifestations of joy or of enthusiasm. Throughout the day the emperor had exhibited an unaccustomed apathy, and remained so far from the theatre of action, as to make the communication of his orders tardy, and correct observation difficult, if not impossible. Illness, doubtless, had some share in producing this result; but Napoleon, knowing by painful experience the obstinate valour of the enemy, anticipated another great battle before the walls of Moscow, and would not, therefore, expose his troops to further loss in this. "It was my duty," said he, "to think of the general result of the campaign; and it was for that I spared my reserves."

General Kutusoff did not, however, venture another battle for the sake of saving Moscow. On the day after the battle, the Russians retired in good order to within half a league of Moscow, and there held a council of war. Some of the Russian generals were for risking another conflict for the sake of saving the capital, the loss of which, they contended, would spread consternation throughout the empire. Kutusoff and Barclay urged that the retreat should be continued. The former observed—"Notwithstanding the valour which my army displayed at Borodino, I was obliged to yield to numbers, and commence my retreat. Since then the enemy has received numerous reinforcements; and at present I have fewer chances of success than I had then.

Our dangers are increased by the proximity of Moscow, where I should lose half my army, if it was necessary, after a reverse, to traverse the capital. On the other hand, if we retire without combating, we must abandon it; a cruel sacrifice, it is true, but not one which draws after it the destruction of the empire. On the contrary, the enemy, far removed from his resources, possessing as his only communication the road from Smolensk to Moscow; on the eve of experiencing reverses on the Dwina by the arrival of the armies of Moldavia and Finland, will find himself in the most critical position. The army is in a bad position, and is inferior in numbers to the enemy. Such were the losses which it sustained at Borodino, that entire brigades are now commanded by field-officers, and regiments by captains; consequently, the same precision as heretofore in its movements is scarcely to be expected. Everything, therefore, conspires to prove that we should be beat if we fought a battle. The safety of the country depends on the preservation of the army; a victory would not rid us of the enemy; while a disaster so near Moscow would occasion its entire destruction." This reasoning prevailed, and on the 14th of September the Russian army continued its retreat, mournfully defiling through the streets of "the sacred city."

It has been conjectured that the Russian general might have arrived at a different conclusion, had he known the exhausted and impoverished condition of the French, deficient alike both in provisions and in ammunition. On the morning of the 14th, the advanced guard of the French army came in sight of the domes and towers of Moscow. Filled with hope, they shouted with delight at the prospect of a termination of the sufferings they had undergone. The sounds reached the ears of the emperor, who, hastening forward, exclaimed, "Behold at last that famous city! It was full time."

Napoleon was, however, doomed to experience a bitter disappointment. Moscow was found to be deserted. Murat and his cavalry preceded the French army into the city, as yet untouched, but inanimate. "Struck with profound astonishment," observes Ségur, "at the sight of this complete solitude, they replied to the taciturnity of this modern Thebes by a silence equally solemn. These warriors listened, with a secret shuddering, to the steps of their



horses resounding alone amid these deserted palaces. They were astonished to hear nothing but themselves amid such numerous habitations." On learning the news, the emperor was incredulous, and he waited in expectation of receiving a deputation from the magistrates or chief nobles of the city. At length he became convinced of the truth; and on the 15th of September he entered the city, and at first took up his residence in a suburban palace. The silence that reigned throughout the city was painful to the French troops, who, however, took possession of the houses, which they found full of excellent provisions. The superior officers were received at the gates of palaces by servants in livery, eager to offer a brilliant hospitality. The owners of these mansions, unaware of the fate which awaited the city, had taken great pains to procure protectors for their rich dwellings, by receiving French officers into them. The latter, after the privations they had so recently experienced, welcomed with pleasure the luxury, fraught with all those signs of sensuousness which form so strange but frequent a contrast with ardent, popular devotion, and savage military energy.

The emperor Alexander behaved with a dignified patriotism on this occasion. After the entrance of the enemy into the capital, the czar issued an address to the empire,

which concluded with these spirited words: "Let there be no pusillanimous depression; let us swear to redouble our courage and perseverance. The enemy has entered deserted Moscow as into a tomb, without the means either of ruling or subsistence. He invaded Russia at the head of 300,000 men; half have perished from the sword, famine, or desertion; the other half are shut up in the capital, bereft of everything. He is in the centre of Russia, and not a Russian has yielded to his power. Meanwhile our forces increase, and surround him. He is in the midst of a warlike people, whose armies envelop him on every side: soon, to escape from famine, he will be compelled to cut his way through our brave battalions. Shall we, then, yield, when Europe is in admiration at our exertions? Let us show ourselves worthy of giving her an example, and bless the hand which has chosen us to be the first of nations in the cause of freedom.\* In the present miserable state of the human race, what glory awaits the nation which, after having patiently endured all the evils of war, shall succeed, by the force of courage and virtue, not only in reconquering its own rights, but in extending the blessings of freedom to other states; and even to those who have been made the unwilling instruments of attempting its subjugation!"

## CHAPTER LII.

CONFLAGRATION OF MOSCOW; NARROW ESCAPE OF NAPOLEON FROM THE KREMLIN; HE REMAINS AT MOSCOW WITH THE EXPECTATION OF RECEIVING PROPOSALS OF PEACE FROM ALEXANDER; TALKS OF MARCHING ON TO ST. PETERSBURG; ALEXANDER REFUSES ALL NEGOTIATION; NAPOLEON ABANDONS MOSCOW; BATTLES BETWEEN THE FRENCH AND RUSSIANS; RETREAT OF THE FRENCH BEFORE THE ADVANCING ENEMY; THE WINTER SETS IN SUDDENLY; DREADFUL SUFFERINGS OF THE FRENCH; THEIR DEFEAT AT KRASNOI; FEARFUL PASSAGE OF THE BEREZINA; NAPOLEON ABANDONS THE ARMY AND RETURNS TO PARIS; THE REMAINS OF THE GRAND ARMY REACH THE PRUSSIAN TERRITORY, AND ARE TREATED WITH COMPASSION.

THE French army at Moscow anticipated either a speedy peace, as a result of its occupation of the capital of the enemy, or good winter cantonments in case the war should be prolonged. These hopes were

doomed to be extinguished beneath a tragic accumulation of disappointment and distress.

On the very day that the French entered the city, a fire broke out in a building containing vast quantities of spirits; and before

\* This is unfamiliar language when uttered by a Russian czar; but Alexander really meant the freedom of princes, not the freedom of peoples. Napoleon was the oppressor of monarchs; and the latter rising

against him, uttered gracious language to the subjects on whose resources and energies they so depended, and whom it was, therefore, necessary to conciliate.





THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW.

THE LONDON LITHOGRAPH AND PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA







it was effectually extinguished, another conflagration burst forth in a collection of buildings called the Bazaar, situated at no great distance from the Kremlin. The soldiers were unable to prevent the destruction of the Bazaar; but although a violent wind prevailed, the fire did not extend further. During the night, the Exchange was discovered to be in flames, which the wind carried to many neighbouring buildings. It is said, that rockets were also seen in the air, and some wretches seized in the act of spreading the conflagration. Napoleon ordered that military commissions should be formed in each quarter of the city, for the purpose of trying and executing all incendiaries, and that all the available troops should be employed in extinguishing the flames. The following day the emperor hastened to the spot; and Marshal Mortier, whom he had appointed governor of the city, pointed out to him some houses closely shut up, and uninjured from without, yet from which a black smoke was already issuing. Napoleon left the spot in a pensive humour, and proceeded to the vast palace of the Kremlin, to which he now removed his head-quarters.

On the 16th, the emperor wrote a letter containing proposals of peace to Alexander, and dispatched it by a Russian officer who was found in the great hospital. It remained unanswered. Alexander had taken his course, and resolved to defeat the enemy by a kind of passive resistance. This night, also, fires raged in different parts of Moscow, and the city appeared to be in flames in every direction. Napoleon was greatly agitated. He rose frequently, paced to and fro, and again sat down abruptly. Then hastening to the window, he watched the progress of the conflagration, at the same time uttering such exclamations as, "What a tremendous spectacle!—It is their own work!—So many palaces!—What extraordinary resolution!—What men!—These are indeed Scythians!"

Though the fire was still a considerable distance from the emperor, as the river Moskwa and an extensive vacant space was between them, yet the panes of the windows against which he leaned, already felt hot to the touch. At this moment, it was reported that the Kremlin was undermined, and some of the attendants of the emperor were beside themselves with fear; but he received the information with a smile of incredulity. The atmosphere, at length, became oppres-

sive from the thick smoke which filled it; and several of his generals, including even the fiery and fearless Murat, implored him to remove from this scene of danger. It was not until a shout arose that the Kremlin was on fire, that Napoleon yielded to their entreaties. The tower of the arsenal was in flames, and a Russian soldier of the police had been found in it. The incendiary was interrogated in the presence of the emperor, and afterwards dispatched by the enraged grenadiers with their bayonets.

Napoleon then yielded to necessity, and abandoned the Kremlin, though not without great danger of perishing in the flames by which that vast collection of buildings was besieged in every direction. By a narrow passage the emperor, his officers, and his guards made their escape. General Ségur, who was of the party, thus narrates the incident:—"But what had they gained by this movement? They had approached nearer to the fire, and could neither retreat nor remain where they were; and how were they to advance? how force a passage through the billows of this sea of flame? Those who had traversed the city, stunned by the tempest and blinded by the ashes, could not find their way, since the streets themselves were no longer distinguishable amidst smoke and ruins.

"There was no time to be lost. The roaring of the flames around us became every moment more violent. A single, narrow, winding street, completely on fire, appeared to be rather the entrance than the outlet to this hell. The emperor rushed on foot, and without hesitation, into this narrow passage. He advanced amid the crackling of the flames, the crash of floors, the fall of burning timbers, and of the red-hot iron roofs which tumbled around him. These ruins impeded his progress. The flames, which, with impetuous roar, consumed the edifices between which we were proceeding, spreading beyond the walls, were blown out by the wind, and formed an arch over our heads. We walked on a ground of fire, beneath a fiery sky, and between two walls of fire. The intense heat burned our eyes, which we were nevertheless obliged to keep open and fixed on the danger. A consuming atmosphere, glowing ashes, detached flames, parched our throats, rendering our respiration short and dry; and we were already almost suffocated by the smoke. Our hands were burnt, either in endeavouring to protect



our faces from the insupportable heat, or in brushing off the sparks which every moment covered and penetrated our garments.

"In this inexpressible distress, and when a rapid advance seemed to be our only means of safety, our guide stopped in uncertainty and agitation. Here would probably have terminated our adventurous career, had not some pillagers of the first corps, recognising the emperor amidst the whirling flames, ran up and guided him towards the smoking ruins of a quarter which had been reduced to ashes in the morning."

From this spot Napoleon arrived at Petrowsky, where he passed the night in ruminating on the terrible state of danger to which his troops were exposed. The next morning (the 17th) he cast his first looks towards Moscow, in the hope that the conflagration had subsided. The whole city appeared like a vast furnace, from which columns of fire rose in whirling eddies to the sky. For some time he observed a painful silence, and then exclaimed—"This forebodes great misfortunes to us!" Moscow had been the aim of all his hopes, and now it was no more. Napoleon hesitated, and was unable to decide what course was the best to pursue. To preserve appearances he talked of marching on to St. Petersburg; but he well knew that his troops were destitute of all the requisites for so extensive an excursion.

The fire ceased on the 20th of September. About two-thirds of the city had been consumed; but the Kremlin had escaped the flames, and the emperor resolved on returning to it. "The camps which he traversed on his way thither presented an extraordinary sight. In the fields, amidst thick and cold mud, large fires were kept up with mahogany furniture, windows, and gilded doors. Around these fires, on a litter of damp straw, imperfectly sheltered by a few boards, were seen the soldiers and their officers, splashed all over with mud, and blackened with smoke, seated in arm-chairs, or reclined on silken couches. At their feet were spread or heaped, Cashmere shawls, the rarest furs of Siberia, the gold stuffs of Persia, and silver dishes, off which they had nothing to eat but a black dough, baked in the ashes, and half-broiled and bloody horseflesh. Singular assemblage of abundance and want, of riches and filth, of luxury and wretchedness! Between the camp and the city were met troops of soldiers dragging along their booty, or driving

before them, like beasts of burden, Muscovites bending under the weight of the pillage of their capital; for the fire brought to view nearly 20,000 inhabitants, previously unobserved in that immense city. Some of these Muscovites, of both sexes, were well dressed; they were tradespeople. They came with the wreck of their property to seek refuge at our fires. They lived pell-mell with our soldiers, protected by some, and tolerated, or rather scarcely remarked, by others.\*

What remained of Moscow was abandoned to pillage; for recent events had so disorganised the French soldiers, that it was found impossible to restrain them. They were frequently seen seated on bales of merchandise, or heaps of sugar and coffee; amidst wines and the most exquisite liqueurs, which they were offering in exchange for a morsel of bread. Such was the state of things when the emperor re-entered Moscow and returned to the Kremlin. He issued strict orders with the object of restoring order, but he was unable to effectually accomplish so desirable a result. The destruction of Moscow was publicly attributed, by the Russian authorities, to the French, and used as a fresh means of exciting hatred against them. It is, however, and without doubt correctly, attributed to Count Rostopchin, the governor of the city. He was denounced in Napoleon's bulletins as having kindled the conflagration by means of 300 incendiaries, who set fire to the city in as many places simultaneously. Rostopchin never acknowledged the act; and in the year 1823, published a pamphlet on the subject, altogether denying that he was the author of it; but without altering the decided conviction of Europe upon the subject. General Buturlin, the Russian historian of the campaign, in a subsequent edition of his work, remarks—"It is ungenerous to disbelieve a man who would thus voluntarily despoil himself of the glory of a civic crown; but, on the other hand, information the most positive leaves no room in the author's mind to doubt that the fire of Moscow was prepared and executed by the Russian authorities;" *i.e.*, by the governor of the city.

Several days passed on, and Napoleon waited in expectation of proposals of peace and submission from Alexander. The latter did not make any reply to the letter sent to him; and the French emperor at length

\* General Count Ségur.



became exasperated. On the 3rd of October, he summoned his marshals, and proposed to them to burn the remainder of Moscow, and then to march on to St. Petersburg; but their expostulations induced him to forego so desperate an enterprise. It is probable that he did not himself seriously contemplate it; for he sent his aide-de-camp, Count Lauriston, to the Russian camp, to propose an armistice and obtain a safe-conduct to St. Petersburg. "I want peace," said the emperor to the count; "I must have peace; I absolutely will have peace; only save my honour!"

General Kutusoff informed Lauriston, that to grant him a safe-conduct to St. Petersburg exceeded his powers; but he sent the letter from Napoleon to Alexander, and offered an armistice until the return of the messenger. During the continuance of the truce, some of the Cossack chiefs asked the French officers, "If they had not, in their own country, corn enough, air enough, graves enough; in short, room enough to live and die? Why, then, did they come so far from home to throw away their lives, and to fatten a foreign soil with their blood?" The armistice was badly observed by the Russians; and Kutusoff's only object in granting it was to gain time till the winter set in, and the retreat of the French became impossible, or utterly ruinous. Some weeks elapsed before an answer came from the emperor Alexander. It was addressed to Kutusoff, and contained an absolute command to "admit of no negotiation whatever, or relation tending toward peace with the enemy."

The weather had been remarkably fine; but, on the 13th of October, a fall of snow gave the first indication of winter. On the 17th the Russians assumed offensive operations. The advanced guard of the French army—consisting of 30,000 men, commanded by Murat, and posted in the neighbourhood of Winkoroo—was attacked by a Russian force under General Benningsen. The French were taken by surprise, and sustained a defeat. Murat was wounded; two generals killed; besides the loss of three or four thousand men. They also lost thirty-eight pieces of cannon, and all their ammunition and baggage-waggons. In fact, it was with great difficulty that they were able to effect their retreat, which they did in much disorder. This incident aroused Napoleon from his apathy, and he resolved on the abandonment of Moscow. "Let us march upon

Kaluga," said he, "and woe be to those whom I meet with by the way!"

The emperor commenced his march from Moscow on the 19th of October, at the head of more than 100,000 soldiers: only 12,000 sick were left behind; for the rest, at Moscow, had promoted the recovery of the remainder. Yet Napoleon perceived with pain that his cavalry and artillery might be said rather to crawl than to march. The army was followed by a train of carriages and vehicles of every kind, loaded with trophies and the plunder which the soldiers had accumulated. Some Russian girls also voluntarily accompanied their seducers; and many of the peasants, who had been taken prisoners, were compelled to carry or drive the booty of their captors. Some of the host of camp-followers were even wheeling along barrows filled with whatever they could remove, unconscious, in their greediness, that they must necessarily abandon them in the course of the march.

General Kutusoff, on hearing of the retreat of the French from Moscow, marched towards Malo-Jaroslavitz, with the hope of being able to intercept their passage. On the 24th, a battle took place at this town, between the advanced guards of the two armies. Each side desired to gain possession of the town, which had been set on fire, and was, while burning, taken and retaken no less than seven times. The French at length remained in possession of it; but their victory was purchased with the loss of 3,000 men in killed and wounded. That of the Russians amounted to about 8,000. During the action, Kutusoff had established himself in such a position as to preclude the possibility of a farther advance towards Kaluga without a general battle.

Such was the strength of the Russian position, that Marshal Bessières, who had been sent by the emperor to reconnoitre, pronounced it to be unassailable. No alternative, therefore, remained but to fall back on the road to Smolensk—a movement which so much resembled retreat in the face of an enemy, that the contemplation of it plunged Napoleon into a state of irritable melancholy. On the morning of the 25th, he sat up himself to examine the ground, and narrowly escaped being taken prisoner by a body of Cossacks. The emperor agreed with Bessières, that an attempt to force the Russian position would be too hazardous; and, on his return, he held a council as to the course to be pursued. Murat recommended an attack; and said, that with the remnant of



his cavalry, and that of the guard, he would reopen the road to Kaluga at the point of the sword. Bessières urged, that a retreat had become unavoidably necessary. Napoleon sadly and unwillingly acquiesced. "Hardihood has had its day," said he; "we have already done too much for glory; nothing remains to be thought of but the safety of the army." Ségur relates, that this decision cost the emperor so much pain, that, in the inward struggle which it occasioned, he lost the use of his senses.

Orders were issued for the retreat of the army to Smolensk, by Borowsk and Mojaïsk; and, at dawn of the 26th of October, Napoleon, for the first time in his life, retired in the open field from his enemies. At the same time Kutusoff, dismayed by the first movement of the French, and fearing to risk a battle, abandoned Kaluga. These well-matched combatants retired from each other out of mutual awe. Before the entire evacuation of Moscow by the French, Napoleon ordered the Kremlin to be blown up. General Mortier, to whom this task was committed, caused barrels of gunpowder to be placed in all the halls of the palace of the czars, and 183,000 pounds under the vaults which supported them. The explosion was tremendous, and much of that mighty pile of buildings was shattered into ruinous heaps.

Dejection prevailed throughout the French army. After some days' marching they came in sight of a devastated plain, on which 30,000 half-devoured corpses, and a number of skeletons, were mingled with fragments of helmets and cuirasses, broken drums, gun-stocks, tatters of uniforms, and blood-stained standards. A sense of horror ran through the spectators as they murmured, "It is the field of the great battle!" It was, indeed, the terrible plain of Borodino; and there, furrowed by cannon-balls, stood the great redoubt, looking like an extinguished and destroyed volcano. The troops hurried on, merely turning their faces to take a last melancholy look at the hideous golgotha, where so many of their companions had been so uselessly sacrificed. Napoleon, harassed by the number of unnecessary persons who accompanied his retreating troops, caused 2,000 Russian prisoners to be marched on before, and then massacred. His troops were astonished; and some of his generals murmured at this atrocity; the rest of the unfortunates were abandoned, and left to perish. This barbarity resulted from the

indifference exhibited by the Russian authorities for the lives of their soldiers, in rejecting all proposals of an exchange of prisoners.

General Kutusoff, on being informed of the retreat of the enemy, moved in pursuit on a line parallel to the road they occupied. The French were at first allowed to retire without molestation; and Napoleon trusted that he had got so far in advance of Kutusoff, as to secure an uninterrupted retreat. By the 2nd of November, the emperor had reached Wiazma. But the rear-guard of the French, under Davoust, on approaching that town on the 3rd, found the road occupied by the advanced guard of the Russians, under General Milaradowitch;\* while Count Platoff and a large body of Cossacks pressed upon their rear. A furious engagement took place, and lasted nearly the whole day. It terminated with the retreat of the French in disorder, after a loss of 6,000 men; 2,000 of whom were made prisoners. The baggage of the French, and several pieces of artillery, also fell into the hands of the enemy.

The weather, though cold at night, had been generally very favourable by day. On the 6th of November, the terrible Russian winter set in. The army marched through semi-darkness, occasioned by cold and penetrating fog. Then came a snow-storm, so heavy that it seemed as if the very sky was falling; and a tempest of wind, which howled through the forests and over the plains with resistless fury. The snow drifted into every hollow and ditch; and the deceitful surface, yielding to the tread of the straggling soldiers, engulfed those who fell; and, from their debility, generally soon found a winding-sheet and a grave in this snowy wilderness. "Those who followed, turned aside; but the storm driving into their faces the snow that was descending from the sky and that which it raised from the ground, seemed bent on opposing their progress. It penetrated through their garments, and soddened their torn shoes and boots. Their wet clothes froze upon their bodies; an icy envelope encased them, and stiffened all their limbs. A keen and violent wind interrupted respiration; it seized their breath at the moment when they exhaled it, and converted it into icicles, which hung from their beards all round their mouths. The unfortunate creatures still

\* Milaradowitch, from his impetuosity and his love of fighting, was denominated by the French, the Russian Murat.









CEMETERY OF THE SMOLENSKO CHURCH.

ON THE VASILY DISTRICT NEAR PETERSBURG.

DESIGNED BY J. H. B. AND PUBLISHED BY T. H. B. LONDON.





THE CHURCH OF VARIAN BLARENHOLT, MOSCOW.

THE LONDON PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY, LIMITED.

UNIV OF  
CALIFORNIA







crawled on, shivering, till the snow, gathering like balls under their feet, or the fragment of some broken article, a branch of a tree, or the body of one of their comrades, caused them to stumble and to fall. There they groaned in vain; the snow soon covered them; slight hillocks marked the spot where they lay: such was their only grave! The road was studded with these undulations, like a cemetery. The most intrepid and the most indifferent were affected; they passed on quickly with averted looks. But before them, around them, there was nothing but snow. This immense and dreary uniformity extended further than the eye could reach; the imagination was astounded; it was like a vast winding-sheet, which nature had thrown over the army. The only objects not enveloped by it were some gloomy pines—trees of the tombs, with their funereal verdure, the motionless aspect of their gigantic, black trunks, and their dismal look, which completed the doleful appearance of a general mourning, and of an army dying amidst a nature already dead.”\*

Many of the soldiers dropped, or threw away their arms; while the fingers of others were frozen to the muskets they still held. Numbers left their ranks and wandered over the country in hope of finding shelter for the coming night; but they either fell into the hands of the Cossacks or were massacred by the peasantry, who, in some cases, stripped them naked, and left them to expire in the snow. The night, of sixteen hours' duration, was passed by the army in misery which baffles description. The pine-branches, laden with frost, could scarcely be kindled; and the fires, when lighted, were not unfrequently extinguished by the snow. The repasts of the soldiers consisted of the half-cooked flesh of lean horses, killed in consequence of exhaustion, and a few spoonfuls of rye-flour mixed with water. The next morning, the bivouacs were marked by circular ranges of soldiers lying dead on the frozen ground, while around lay the bodies of several thousand horses. The effect of these horrors on the minds of the army was terrible; a gloomy despondency fell on the men, and neglect of discipline spread rapidly. A dreadful selfishness entered into almost every bosom, and the men snatched the cloaks from their fallen comrades, to warm their own shivering limbs. Those who first got round the fires at night fiercely

repelled their less fortunate comrades, who strove to share in the warmth; and saw them sink down and die with indifference. Nearly every one seemed engrossed in providing for his own safety; and in this general extinction of sympathy, the fate of others remained unheeded. Some brave and firm men there were, however, who still bore up with heroic endurance, and strove to preserve their customary serenity amidst the fearful scenes which surrounded them.

The horrors of famine were soon added to the sufferings of the retreating French. Horseflesh became the sole means of subsistence to the great body of the troops; and when one of these wretched creatures fell by the wayside, a group of starving men seized upon it and shared its remains amongst them. By degrees the army assumed the appearance of a hideous mass of stragglers, arrayed in fur cloaks or finery found at Moscow, or stripped from the dead who had perished by the way. As to the emperor, he, throughout the retreat, remained grave, silent, and resigned, concealing his mental suffering, and presenting the appearance of a great mind struggling with adversity. At this period it was that he received intelligence of General Malet's conspiracy against him at Paris, and his whole thoughts were bent on reaching the French capital.

The army arrived at Smolensk between the 9th and the 13th of November, straggling into the town in a wretched manner. Such was the rush for food, that it required the most strenuous efforts of the troops, who had been left there, to prevent the newcomers from murdering one another at the doors of the magazines. Napoleon had made great exertions to provide supplies of provisions along his line of retreat; but a series of calamities had prevented his efforts from being adequate to the immense demand upon them. On the 14th, the emperor and the French army quitted Smolensk, marching in gloomy silence. Napoleon had hastened his departure, in consequence of the reverses experienced by detachments of the French army, under Murat and Marshal St. Cyr, in engagements with the Russians. At the same time, the Russian general, Kutusoff, with the object of arresting the further retreat of the French, and compelling them to surrender, directed his march upon the village of Krasnoi. On the 16th, 17th, and 18th, engagements took place on this spot and in the neighbourhood. The Russians were, in all, both the assailants and

\* Ségur.



the victors. The result of these battles was a loss to the French of 10,000 men killed or drowned, and 26,000 taken prisoners; amongst whom were 300 officers; 116 pieces of cannon were also captured. This terrible blow was inflicted by the Russians with the loss of only 2,000 men to themselves. Napoleon and a part of his army escaped; but the troops who followed him were reduced to 10,000 weakened combatants, and twice that number of stragglers. But for the caution of the Russian commander, it is probable that the French army might have been utterly annihilated.

The latter continued their dismal retreat, but in a state of terrible disorganisation. Napoleon, surrounded by a body of officers, who still preserved some appearance of regularity, marched on foot, with a birch staff in his hand, to avoid falling on the ice-bound roads. He would, doubtless, have perished amidst the appalling confusion by which he was surrounded, but for the incessant devotion of the officers near his person. His rear divisions had to sustain repeated attacks from the Russians, especially from the flying bodies of Cossacks; but the frost and the snow, and the fierce blasts of night which swept over those vast open plains, killed more than either sword or spear, bullets or bayonets. The wretched soldiers perished like rotten sheep; and when Napoleon arrived at Oresa, in Lithuania, he had only 12,000 men with arms in their hands, and his 40,000 horses had dwindled down to 3,000 starved and miserable animals. He was affected by the painful condition of his troops. "These poor soldiers rend my heart," said he; "I cannot, however, give them relief."

In this state the emperor and his skeleton army reached the banks of the Berezina, where he was joined by a corps of reserve of nearly 50,000 men, under Marshals Victor and Oudinot, who had been left behind in his advance upon Moscow. This seasonable relief saved Napoleon from destruction, and he once more found himself at the head of a tolerably numerous force. But fortune no longer smiled upon him with any constancy, and these reinforcements were soon terribly thinned by the enemy. On reaching Borisow, a town on the banks of the Berezina, the French found every passage occupied by the Russians, whose main army, under Kutusoff, was also approaching. The brave Marshal Ney observed to his brother-officers—"Our situation is unparalleled. If

Napoleon extricate himself to day, he must have the devil in him." Murat proposed to the emperor to save himself and cross the river at some leagues' distance; adding, that he had some Poles who would answer for his safety, and conduct him to Wilna. To this proposal Napoleon would not listen; and though fully aware of his dangerous position, he resolved to make an effort to delude the enemy. After gazing upon the thickening clouds of Russians who covered the opposite bank of the river and filled the neighbouring woods and marshes, he gave orders to make a false attack further down the stream.

This stratagem succeeded. The Russians filed off in pursuit, and their columns were lost in the woods. Napoleon instantly ordered bridges to be constructed, and defended with cannon. His orders were obeyed; but the Russians, discovering their mistake, speedily returned and opened a destructive cannonade, which swept the French lines, and did terrible execution upon them. Galled by this murderous fire, the troops, in their eagerness to gain the opposite shore, lost all consideration for the condition of their comrades. The feeble and the wounded were overthrown, and ruthlessly trampled to death. There had been time only to erect two narrow bridges across the river; the widest of which would scarcely admit of the passage of a gun-carriage. This frail structure, crowded to excess with fugitives pushing madly forward to escape from the fire of the Russian artillery, and heavily laden with ordnance and ammunition-waggons, at length gave way, and sank with a tremendous crash. The air was rent with the hideous yells of those crushed by the falling cannon, with the piercing shrieks of women, and the dismal groans of the wounded, as they were precipitated into the half-frozen current, where they met an untimely grave. So loud were the distracted cries of these miserable victims, that the thunder of the artillery was almost drowned by their frantic importunity for that help which it was impossible for them to obtain. The remaining bridge presented a scene of horror scarcely less terrible. In the struggle to obtain a footing on this, now the only path, thousands were thrust into the stream, as well as mowed down by the incessant showers of grapeshot directed against them by the Russians. Amidst all this carnage, the divisions of Marshals Ney and Victor, stationed to pro-









THE GREAT MEETING AT THE TEMPLE, LONDON.  
 On the 1st. Sunday by Haller in the "Illustration of Time," 1841.





THE LITTLE FARM HOUSE  
TOWN OF THE PIRATES







test the passage of the troops, fought bravely against a much superior force, and steadily maintained their ground until late in the evening. Then, after having suffered a severe loss, they made good their retreat over the bridge, and set it on fire in order to cut off pursuit. The measure was, doubtless, a necessary one, but it involved the abandonment of a great number of wounded soldiers and camp attendants, who were left to their fate; together with a quantity of baggage and cannon. This fatal passage had cost Napoleon about one-half of his reinforced army. According to the Russian accounts, when the river was cleared from the ice in the following spring, not less than 36,000 dead bodies were taken from its bed.

Napoleon and the skeleton of the "grand army," contrived to evade their Russian pursuers. Continually harassed by bodies of Cossacks, who hung on his rear and hovered on both his flanks, the emperor ran imminent hazard of capture. On the 3rd of December he arrived at Malodezna, from whence he issued the famous twenty-ninth bulletin, which agitated or astounded the whole of Europe. The emperor felt that fiction was no longer available, and he told the whole truth in all its sternness; frankly confessing that, except the guards, he had no longer an army. On the 5th he arrived at Smorgoni, where he took leave of his generals, left the command of the army, such as it was, to Murat, and set off in a sledge to Paris, accompanied by Marshal Caulaincourt, whose name he assumed during the journey. After pausing at Warsaw and at Dresden, he reached the palace of the Tuileries on the night of the 18th of December. Notwithstanding the fearful calamities of which his ambition had been the cause, he was received by the people with enthusiasm. The disastrous results of the campaign, and the sacrifice of so many thousand Frenchmen, seemed forgotten in the reflection that the emperor was safe.

The army left under the command of Murat after the flight of Napoleon, mustered, including the garrison of Wilna and the division by which it was joined after the passage of the Berezina, about 80,000 men. The sufferings endured by these wretched creatures were of the most harrowing

description. They perished by thousands, from want and the extreme severity of the weather. So destitute was their condition, that at Wilna, when rations were distributed from the magazines there, veteran soldiers were seen to shed tears of joy at the sight of a loaf of bread. After eagerly devouring it, many fell asleep, and died during their slumbers, from the effects of cold.

The French were attacked at Wilna, and, after a vain attempt at defence, compelled to continue their retreat, leaving in the hospitals there about 17,000 dead and dying men. The miserable remains of the French army, once more dragging their weary limbs along the interminable roads, were literally hunted by Platoff and his Cossacks, whose spears dispatched all poor wretches who lagged behind from exhaustion. Many of the unhappy soldiers lost their senses, from the effect of the horrors of their situation. At length the Russians gave up the pursuit, and the ghastly fragments of the "grand army" entered the Prussian territory, and took up their quarters at Königsberg, where they were received with feelings of compassion by the inhabitants. The loss of the French and their auxiliaries in this awful campaign, is estimated by Boutourlin at 125,000 killed, 132,000 dead of fatigue, hunger, disease, and cold, and 193,000 prisoners, including 3,000 officers and 48 generals.\* They also left behind 900 pieces of cannon, and 25,000 waggons. The Russians state their own loss to have amounted to 230,000 men; comprising 130,000 soldiers killed in battle, and 100,000 persons who perished in the woods, in consequence of the burning of Moscow and other places. This is supposed to be below the truth. Remarkable as it may appear, the Russians suffered more from the cold than the French: amongst the ranks of the latter, the survivors were chiefly Italians, or Frenchmen of the provinces to the south of the Loire.

The Austrian and Prussian contingents had rendered but little assistance to Napoleon; and, during the retreat, they took the first opportunity to desert him. The Prussian general York, whose duty it was to have covered the retreat of the French army, on being closely pressed by his pursuers, suddenly made a truce with his Russian opponent, General Diebitsch; and a few days afterwards they concluded the convention of

\* In all, 450,000 men. Alison estimates the loss of the French at 550,000 men: he says, that out of the 600,000 French soldiers who entered Russia, not

more than 32,000 escaped from it. The remainder of the survivors, amounting, in all, to 85,000 men, were Austrians and Prussians.



Posarum, by which all hostilities between the Russians and the Prussians ceased; and the latter continued their retreat to their own country unmolested. The Austrians, also, were permitted to retire unassailed, and immediately afterwards resumed a questionable neutrality, which leant more towards Russia than to France.

### CHAPTER LIII.

RUSSIA AND PRUSSIA TAKE THE FIELD AGAINST NAPOLEON; PROFITLESS VICTORIES OF THE LATTER; AUSTRIA JOINS THE ALLIES; CAMPAIGN OF 1813; THE ALLIES INVADE FRANCE; REVERSES OF NAPOLEON; HIS MISTAKEN MARCH TOWARDS THE RHINE; ADVANCE OF THE ALLIES ON PARIS; BATTLE BEFORE THE CITY; CAPITULATION OF PARIS, AND ITS OCCUPATION BY THE ALLIES; GENEROUS BEARING OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER; A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT DECLARE NAPOLEON DETHRONED; RESTORATION OF THE BOURBONS, AND DEPARTURE OF NAPOLEON FOR ELBA; PEACE BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE ALLIES; ALEXANDER VISITS ENGLAND, AND IS RECEIVED WITH ENTHUSIASM.

RUSSIA now prepared to retaliate on the foe who had inflicted upon her so much calamity. On the 22nd of February, 1813, Alexander issued a proclamation, in which he endeavoured to excite the whole of Europe against Napoleon. This document observed—"We take advantage of our victories to extend the hand of succour to the oppressed nations. The moment is come: never was a more glorious opportunity presented to unfortunate Germany—the enemy flies, without courage and without hope. He astonishes, by his terror, the nations that were wont to be astonished by his pride and his barbarity. We speak with the frankness which is suitable to strength. Russia, and England her intrepid ally, who for twenty years has continued shaking that colossus of crime which threatens the universe, have no thought of their own aggrandisement. It is our benefits, and not the limits of our empire, that we wish to extend to the remotest nations. The destinies of Vesuvius and of Guadiana, have been determined on the banks of the Borysthenes; it is thence that Spain will recover the liberty that she has defended with heroism and energy in an age of feebleness and baseness."

Prussia had not only deserted Napoleon in the campaign, but she had thrown off the mask—entered into an alliance with Russia, and declared herself hostile towards her former oppressor. The French emperor prepared for the approaching contest with his customary self-reliance. He appealed to the senate, who voted a conscription of 350,000 men; and such was the enthusiasm of the principal cities of France, that in addition to these immense levies, they voted

regiments of volunteers, to be raised and equipped at their own expense.

Alexander endeavoured to induce Austria to enter with him into a European alliance against France; but Austria held aloof from this extremity, and offered her mediation, with a view of putting an end to the calamities which were desolating Europe. Shortly afterwards, however, the Austrian cabinet made a secret convention with Russia, which evinced its inclination in favour of that power.

Towards the end of March, an allied army, consisting of 80,000 Russians and 60,000 Prussians, crossed the Elbe, near Wittenburg and Dresden. General Kutusoff, worn out by the fatigues of the last campaign, was no more; and the emperor Alexander himself assumed the chief command of his army. To oppose them, Napoleon led an army of 250,000 men to Saxony: of these troops, however, nearly a fourth part were Germans of Saxony, Westphalia, or Bavaria, whose fidelity was at the least doubtful; while those who came from France were young and inexperienced, for the veteran soldiers had mostly perished. On the 2nd of May, the battle of Lützen took place; in which, after a furious contest, the allies were defeated with a loss of 15,000 men. The victory of the French was, however, by no means a decisive one, and was purchased at a loss equal to that of their enemies. The latter retreated on the following morning to Dresden, from whence they proceeded to a strongly-intrenched position which had been prepared at Bautzen. There they were followed by Napoleon; and a second battle took place, extending over the 20th and



21st of May. After an obstinately-disputed conflict, the allies again retreated. They had now adopted the policy of not placing themselves in danger of undergoing a total defeat, but of retiring whenever the issue of an action seemed doubtful, and taking advantage of their numerous cavalry to cover their retreat, trusting that, in the end, the superiority of their physical resources would obtain for them the advantage. In consequence of the carnage occasioned by the Prussian artillery, the loss of the victors exceeded that of the allies: that of the latter, in killed and wounded, is estimated at 16,000 men; that of the French at 19,000. Alexander, though unfortunate in his assumption of the duties of a general, yet performed them with a courage and coolness which elicited admiration.

The allies were driven again to retreat before the French. Diffident of their power to contend successfully with Napoleon, unless assisted by Austria, they grasped at the offer of an armistice which the French emperor proposed, with the hope of regaining his influence over Alexander. It was concluded at Plesswitz, in Silesia, on the 4th of June. This was an error on the part of Napoleon, and eventually proved of more advantage to Alexander than a victory; for during the continuance of it, Austria, provoked by the undiminished obstinacy and haughtiness of Napoleon (who peremptorily rejected the main condition of definitive peace),\* was prevailed on to join the alliance against him; and when, on the 17th of August, the armistice expired, the forces of the allies, swelled also by the adhesion of Bavaria and Wirtemberg, amounted to more than half a million of men. Of this enormous host, Alexander was ambitious to take the chief command; but finding that Austria was unwilling to consent, from distrust of his military talents, he surrendered his claim in favour of the Austrian prince, Schwartzenberg.

Russia, Austria, Prussia, and Sweden, had entered into a league against Napoleon; while England was carrying on the war against him in Spain, and subsidizing Russia, Prussia, and Sweden. In fact, Europe was in arms against France; Denmark only declared in his favour. The resources of France were now inadequate to the tremendous struggle which such an accumulation of power threatened. To narrate the particu-

lars of this campaign would lead us far beyond our limits; we can only refer to its chief incidents and its result. On the 26th and 27th of August, Napoleon gained a great victory over the allies at Dresden, in which the latter lost 40,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; 40 pair of colours, and 60 pieces of cannon. This good fortune did not continue; and the French army having advanced upon Bohemia, was defeated at Kulm by the Russians, and at Mullendorf by the Prussian general, Kleist. Upon this the hopes of Napoleon were blighted by one defeat after another; and in the battles of Grossbeeren, Dennewitz, Katzbach, Görde, and many others, the Prussians, under the brave Blücher, restored the honour of their arms, and reduced Napoleon to a most critical position in the neighbourhood of Leipzig. Such was the activity of Blücher, that he obtained the name of "Marshal Forwards;" as he was constantly advancing, and almost as constantly fighting. Napoleon's armies lost strength and ground on every side, and his German allies began to forsake him. He, however, determined to make a final stand at Leipzig. There he fought three successive battles, on the 16th, 18th, and 19th of October, against an immensely superior force. During the first two days of action, the French fought gallantly, but lost ground before their assailants. On the 18th, a body of 10,000 Saxons, raising the patriotic shout for Germany, deserted the French and went over to the allies. This defection induced Napoleon to resolve on effecting a retreat towards the Rhine. He made his arrangements during the night. On the morning of the 19th, his army filed out of Leipzig by a long narrow bridge. During this operation they were attacked by the allies, who, after a desperate struggle, burst into the town. As the French blew up the bridge to prevent the allies from pursuing, 25,000 Frenchmen, who remained in the town, were compelled to surrender as prisoners of war. Napoleon himself narrowly escaped a similar fate. The horrors of the passage of the Berezina, though on a smaller scale, were renewed. Multitudes, in their attempt to cross the deep but rapid stream, were drowned, or perished beneath the fire of the enemy. The remnant of the French army fled towards the Rhine, and was compelled to fight its way, at Hanau, through the Bavarians, its late allies. The passage of the Rhine was effected by Napoleon on the 2nd

\* Namely, to give up all his conquests in Germany, and to withdraw with his troops beyond the Rhine.



of November; but such had been the disasters of the campaign and the retreat, that out of an army of 250,000 men, which he led into the field in the month of May, only seventy or eighty thousand recrossed that river. Leaving this force on the left bank, the emperor hastened to Paris. About 80,000 men, whom he had left to hold the Prussian fortresses, eventually surrendered to the allies.

Frederic William advised his allies to carry out their retaliation on Napoleon by an invasion of France; but, for some time, a contrary opinion prevailed at head-quarters, and nearly two months were passed in inactivity. The emperor of Austria, naturally solicitous that the sceptre of France should remain in the hands of his daughter and her descendants, was averse to the adoption of extreme measures against Napoleon, and desired only to humble him sufficiently as to render him no longer formidable to his neighbours. At length it was resolved that no lasting peace could be expected in Europe until the entire dethronement of Napoleon, and the restoration of the ancient territorial limits of France and its ancient race of monarchs. The Russian troops were delighted at the idea of proceeding to Paris; and they resolved to give that city to the flames, in revenge for the destruction of Moscow. Alexander, to his honour, restrained this savage spirit. On the eve of crossing the Rhine, he issued an address to his troops, in which he said—"Our enemies, by piercing to the heart of our dominions, wrought us much evil; but dreadful was the retribution: the Divine wrath crushed them. Let us not take example from them; inhumanity and ferocity cannot be pleasing in the eyes of a merciful God. Let us forget what they have done against us. Instead of animosity and revenge, let us approach them with the words of kindness, with the outstretched hand of reconciliation. Such is the lesson taught by our holy faith. Divine lips have pronounced the command—'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you.' Warriors! I trust that, by your moderation in the enemy's country, you will conquer as much by generosity as by arms; and that, uniting the valour of the soldier against the armed, with the charity of the Christian towards the unarmed, you will crown your exploits by keeping stainless your well-earned reputation of a brave and moral people."

On the 31st of December, 1813, the allied army of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, crossed the Rhine. Napoleon, with undiminished spirit, instantly prepared to meet the invaders. On the 25th of January, 1814, he embraced his wife and son, whom he never saw again, and left the palace of the Tuileries for the army, the head-quarters of which were established at Chalons. His presence imparted both confidence and enthusiasm to his troops, amounting, notwithstanding his activity, to no more than 70,000 men, who had been dismayed at the approach of the enemy, and the retreat to which they had been driven. He now commenced the campaign which has been considered by tacticians as that in which he most strikingly displayed his astonishing genius for military combinations, fertility of resources, and quickness of movement. During it, a conference of the representatives of France and the allies was held at Chatillon, with the object of arranging a peace; but hostilities were actively carried on pending its deliberations. The offers of the allies were not unreasonable; but Napoleon abated nothing of his haughty bearing, and broke up the congress, rather than surrender Antwerp and Mantua.

The events of the campaign were at first favourable to Napoleon, and he inflicted many severe checks on the allies. For more than two months he held at bay the various armies of the allies—now defeating one, then flying to attack another, at times suffering severe reverses himself, yet almost instantly recovering his strength. The courage and genius of the emperor appeared as if capable of effecting miracles. The chances of war were, however, fearfully against him, and the numerical superiority of his enemies overwhelming. At the battle of Craone he experienced a tremendous loss; while at Laon he suffered a severe defeat. Paris was in an alarming situation; for, in consequence of a diversion produced by Blucher, the road to it was left open to Schwartzenberg. Napoleon, self-possessed among the many dangers that environed him, marched against the army of the Austrian general, which he encountered at Arcis-sur-Aube. The battle was an indecisive one, and Napoleon retreated towards the Rhine; thus abandoning the defence of Paris. His object was to threaten the communications of the enemy, and to draw near to the garrisons of the frontier,



from which those supplies of veteran troops could be obtained which were no longer to be found in the heart of France. He trusted, by this means, to threaten the communications of the allies in such a manner as would deter them from advancing further in the direction of the capital. The French troops were greatly discouraged at this retrograde step: murmurs arose; and many of the officers questioned even the sanity of their leader. They were plunging into an endless warfare, and directing their steps towards Germany; while the capital of their country, containing all that was dear to them, was in danger of becoming the prey of the enemy.

The allies, also, were astonished at this movement; and no sooner had it taken place, than, by a junction of part of Blücher's army with that of Schwartzberg, no less than 180,000 armed men stood between Napoleon and Paris. At the same time the allied generals received intelligence of the occupation of Bordeaux by the British troops, and the proclamation of Louis XVIII. with the general concurrence of the inhabitants. Alexander called a council of war, in which the prevalent opinion leaned towards pursuing the French emperor, and attacking him wherever they should find him. This was, however, abandoned in favour of a proposition to march on to Paris, of which, it was presumed, they could take possession, and destroy Napoleon's power there before he could get back to its relief—a decision which excited an extraordinary enthusiasm throughout the allied army, and elicited the unbounded exultation of the Russians.

As the allies advanced, they were encountered by the French forces under Marshals Marmont and Mortier, whom they defeated at the battle of Fère-Champenoise. In this and some other combats the French lost half their artillery, and nearly 11,000 men. Marmont and Mortier immediately retreated towards Paris, the defence of which now devolved on them alone. The allied army continued its advance. "My children," said Alexander to his soldiers, "it is now but a step to Paris." With enthusiastic cheers they responded, "We will take it, father; we remember Moscow." Contrary to what might have been expected, the Russian emperor exerted himself to the utmost to preserve a strict discipline amongst his troops; and with so much success, that the terrified French peasantry were protected from outrage and plunder.

As the allied army approached Paris, the greatest agitation prevailed within that city. Crowds of trembling peasants beset the barriers; the banks were closed, business suspended, and the inhabitants hastened to bury their plate and other valuables. In compliance with a conditional order from Napoleon, the empress and her son left the capital, and proceeded to Blois, a city seated on the waters of the Loire. Maria Louisa was calm, though pale; but the little king of Rome resisted violently, and exclaimed, with tears, that they were betraying his papa. The hearts of the people sunk at their departure; and notwithstanding the preparations for defence, the general conviction was, that nothing remained but to make the best terms that could be obtained from the enemy.

Before the allies could enter Paris, they had again to encounter the French troops under Marshals Marmont and Mortier. These occupied the front of the army gathered for the defence of the city, and were backed by such battalions of the national guards as could be spared from the internal defences of the city. The scholars of the Polytechnic school also came forward as volunteers, to serve the artillery. In all, not more than 35,000 men took part in the defence; but they were supported by 153 pieces of cannon. The veteran soldiers, though firm, and prepared to lay down their lives for their country, were yet sad; for they knew the enemy they had to encounter, and felt that the coming struggle would be in vain. Of the allied troops, 100,000 were ready for the attack; the remainder being left behind, at the Marne and at other places, to keep an eye on the movements of Napoleon. The battle took place on the 30th of March, and the resistance of the French was an intrepid one. The struggle commenced soon after five in the morning; and, for a time, the Russians were repulsed, and their cuirassiers routed. At eight, the emperor Alexander arrived on the field, and ordered up three divisions of the guards, who restored the battle, and drove back the French. At eleven the Prussian army approached, and a vigorous attack was made by the allies, who were received at the point of the bayonet; while the Russian guards were mowed down by the French artillery. The carnage was terrible; and persons unused to war were seen contending with the veterans of Russia. For four hours the



French maintained their position against the constantly-increasing masses and reiterated attacks of the Prussians. The heights which command Paris were then stormed, and at length taken; when Joseph Buonaparte, to save the inhabitants from the horrors of a bombardment, entered into a capitulation with the allies. The latter assented to the demands of the French marshals—that Paris should be protected, its monuments intrusted to the care of the national guard, and private property respected. It was proposed that the French generals and the regular troops should surrender as prisoners of war; but this they resolutely refused, declaring that they would sooner renew the struggle, and perish in the streets. It was therefore finally arranged that they should evacuate Paris; that the public arsenals and magazines should be surrendered; that the national guard should be either disbanded or employed, under the direction of the allies, in the service of the city; which was recommended to the generosity of the victors. In the battle, the allies lost upwards of 9,000 men, of whom 7,100 were Russians. The loss of the French did not exceed 4,500: they had surrendered their capital, it is true; but only to the forces of banded Europe.

A deputation, consisting of the mayor and principal magistrates of Paris, waited on the emperor Alexander, and were received by him with great courtesy. "Gentlemen," said he, "I am not the enemy of the French nation: I am so only of a single man, whom I once admired, and long loved; but who, devoured by ambition and filled with bad faith, came into the heart of my dominions, and left me no alternative but to seek security for my future safety in the liberation of Europe. The allied sovereigns have come here, neither to conquer nor to rule France, but to learn and support what France itself deems most suitable for its own welfare; and they only await, before undertaking the task, to ascertain, in the declared wish of Paris, the probable desire of France."

The day after the battle, the allied sovereigns, preceded by a great military force, entered Paris. The spectacle was a grand one; and the terror of the Parisians gave way to admiration. Alexander and Frederick William had issued a pacific proclamation; and the former was received with a gratitude which amounted to enthusiasm.

Cries of "*Vive l'Empereur Alexandre!*" "*Vive le Roi de Prusse!*" burst from the crowd. "We have been long expecting you," said one unpatriotic sycophant to the czar; who generously answered—"We should have been here sooner, but for the bravery of your troops." Subsequently, Alexander gave an order for the release of all the French prisoners of war confined in Russia.

When Napoleon heard of the attack on Paris, he hurriedly fell back to its relief; but it was too late. Near Fontainebleau he met the columns of the garrison, which were evacuating the city. He had learned the news with rage and incredulity. "It is too dreadful!" he exclaimed: "that comes of trusting cowards and fools! When I am not there, they do nothing but heap up blunder on blunder." At Paris, a provisional government, which had been established, with Talleyrand at its head, passed a decree dethroning the emperor, and absolving the army and people from their oaths of allegiance to him. Then arose the question, Who should rule France? "Sire," said Talleyrand to the emperor Alexander, "there are but two courses open to us: Buonaparte, or Louis XVIII." Napoleon at first refused to abdicate; but at length consented to do so in favour of his son. The generals by whom he was surrounded at Fontainebleau, had assured him that he ought to do so, having previously refused to join him in a last desperate attempt upon Paris. The work of defection had commenced, and Marmont joined the allies with the French troops who had so bravely defended Paris. Other desertions followed; and even the brave Marshal Ney abandoned his master, and gave in his adhesion to the party of Talleyrand. It did not escape the observation of the autocrats who now held the fate of France in their hands, that the recognition of Maria Louisa as regent, and the infant Napoleon as heir, would be a continuation of the revolutionary régime, and they therefore decided in favour of the Bourbons. Indeed, so great a reaction had been produced by the sufferings to which the reckless ambition of Napoleon exposed the nation, that the proposed restoration of the Bourbons to the throne actually became popular. After a violent explosion of passion, the emperor signed an absolute and unqualified resignation of the throne. This document was signed on the 11th of April. It was arranged, that Napoleon was to



retain the barren title of emperor. The island of Elba was assigned him as a place of residence; and a sum of 2,500,000 francs a-year provided for his support. Before the conclusion of this treaty, he was deserted by nearly all the persons of distinction who had formerly thronged around him, and made to feel the bitterness of ingratitude, and the littleness of human nature. He took an affectionate leave of the few generals who remained faithful to him, and of his old guard. "I bid you farewell," said he; "I am satisfied with you; for twenty years I have always found you in the path of glory. All Europe has armed against me; part of the troops have betrayed their duty; France herself has deserted me, by choosing another dynasty; with my soldiers I might have maintained a servile war for years; that, however, would have rendered France unhappy. Be faithful to the new sovereign whom your country has chosen; do not lament my fate; I shall always be happy with the knowledge that you are so. I might have died—nothing was more easy—but I shall always follow the path of honour; with my pen will I record the exploits we have achieved together. Farewell my brave companions—surround me once more—adieu, my children, farewell." He then departed for Elba, where he arrived on the 4th of May. During the voyage he recovered his spirits, and observed—"The Bourbons will be turned off in six months." Before the end of May, his first wife, Josephine, breathed her last. Maria Louisa had been persuaded to abandon him, and place herself and her son under the protection of her father, the emperor of Austria.

On the 7th of April the Comte d'Artois was called to the throne of France, with the title of Louis XVIII. "Nothing is changed; there is only one Frenchman the more in Paris," he observed, as he entered that city on the 3rd of May, where he was received rather with apathy and a sense of humiliation, than with any ardent demonstrations of loyalty. A treaty of peace was signed on the 30th, by the plenipotentiaries of France on one hand, and those of Russia, Prussia, and England on the other. This, at one blow, swept away all the conquests of the Revolution, and reduced France to its

original limits as they stood on the 1st of January, 1792.

The emperor Alexander and the king of Prussia left Paris on the 5th of June, and proceeded to England, which they had been invited to visit by the prince-regent. They were conveyed from Boulogne to Dover in an English ship of war, commanded by the Duke of Clarence; and remained for about three weeks in this country, where they met with an enthusiastic reception from all classes. Amongst the great number of princes and generals by whom they were attended, the most popular with the English people was the brave old Marshal Blucher, and Count Platoff, the hetman of the Cossacks. The emperor and king were entertained with unexampled magnificence by the citizens of London, at Guildhall; and Alexander was invested, at Carlton House, with the order of the Garter. At Oxford, academical honours were bestowed on the allied sovereigns; while at Portsmouth, a splendid naval review was got up for their entertainment. On visiting the arsenal at Woolwich, Alexander was so impressed by the enormous amount of stores in that military emporium, that he exclaimed—"Why, this resembles rather the preparation of a great nation for the commencement of a war, than the stores still remaining to it at its termination." From England Alexander proceeded to Holland, where he visited the cottage which Peter the Great had lived in while working as a ship's carpenter at Saardam. Thence, after a short stay, Alexander proceeded to Carlsruhe. On the 25th of July he arrived at St. Petersburg, where his appearance was greeted by illuminations and other testimonies of national joy. The synod and the senate decreed him the title of "Blagoslovennuï," or "Blessed," which, however, he declined to accept; while to a proposal for erecting a monument to commemorate his exploits, he replied—"I beg the public bodies of the empire to abandon all such designs. May a monument be erected to me in your hearts, as it is to you in mine! May my people bless me in their hearts, as in mine I bless them! May Russia be happy, and may the Divine blessing watch over her and over me!"



## CHAPTER LIV.

CONGRESS OF THE SOVEREIGNS OF EUROPE AT VIENNA; NAPOLEON LEAVES ELBA, AND THE BOURBON SOVEREIGN TAKES TO FLIGHT; THE ALLIES PROSCRIBE HIM AS A GENERAL ENEMY; ENGLAND AND PRUSSIA TAKE THE FIELD AGAINST HIM; WATERLOO, AND THE FINAL OVERTHROW OF NAPOLEON; PARIS AGAIN CAPITULATES, AND LOUIS XVIII. IS A SECOND TIME RESTORED; THE SECOND TREATY OF PARIS; ALEXANDER FOUNDS THE "HOLY ALLIANCE;" HE ESTABLISHES A CONSTITUTION FOR POLAND; HE REFUSES TO ASSIST THE GREEKS IN THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST THE OPPRESSION OF TURKEY; DESPOTIC CONDUCT OF ALEXANDER DURING THE LATTER YEARS OF HIS LIFE; HIS INQUISITORIAL SEVERITY WITH RESPECT TO EDUCATION; HIS DREAD OF CONSPIRACY AND ASSASSINATION; HIS DEATH; ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER.

A CONGRESS of the sovereigns of Europe commenced its deliberations at Vienna, at the close of the year 1814. The emperor Alexander and the king of Prussia attended in person, as did also a number of lesser princes. France was represented by M. Talleyrand, and England at first by Lord Castlereagh, and subsequently by the Duke of Wellington. The principal business to be transacted by the congress, was the redistribution of the numerous provinces surrendered by France at the peace of Paris. So extensive had been the conquests of France, that territories inhabited by no less than 31,691,000 persons, were at the disposal of the allies. The greatest difficulty was with respect to Poland; for Alexander insisted that the whole grand-duchy of Warsaw should be ceded to Russia, as an indemnity for the sacrifices she had made, and the losses she had sustained during the war. He asserted, that if he returned to St. Petersburg without obtaining some adequate compensation for the sacrifices his nation had undergone, he would jeopardise the safety of his crown; alluded to the circumstance that Poland was already, in fact, occupied by the Russian troops; and hinted that he had not less than 300,000 troops ready to march at a moment's notice. It was thus seen, that his scrupulous regard to justice, existed only when his own empire was threatened. Now that the danger was past, he was quite ready to seize the territory of his neighbours with as much greediness, though with more caution, as had ever been displayed by Napoleon.

Prussia, bribed by a hope that her dominions should be restored to her as they stood at the commencement of the war of 1806, together "with such additions as might be deemed practicable," supported the claim of Alexander, which was opposed by France, Austria, and England. On behalf of the latter power, Lord Castlereagh energetically

opposed the union of the crowns of Poland and Russia on the same head, or the proposed annexation of Saxony to Prussia, as contrary to the principles on which the war against Napoleon had been maintained. The arguments of the British plenipotentiary were strenuously supported by those of Talleyrand and Metternich. Alexander was irritated at this opposition, and dissensions arose to such a height, that another appeal to arms became probable, in which France and Austria, sanctioned by England, would have entered into an alliance against Russia and Prussia. Alexander suspended the return of his troops to Russia, and kept them in Poland ready for the resumption of hostilities. His brother, the Grand-duke Constantine, also issued an address to the Poles, announcing the intention of the czar to restore to them their lost nationality, and calling upon them to rally round his standard as the only means of effecting it.

The ambition of Alexander raised up a counteracting influence. Austria, France, and England, entered into a secret treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, binding themselves to act together, honourably to carry into effect the stipulations of the treaty of Paris. Alexander and Frederic William did not long remain in ignorance of this proceeding, which induced them to lower the high tone they had assumed, and consent to an abatement of their pretensions. Prussia was compelled to content herself with but a portion of the territory of Saxony, which she acquired in addition to a part of the grand-duchy of Warsaw, and the whole of her territory as it stood prior to the battle of Jena.

Before the allies had settled their disputes, they were startled by the intelligence that Napoleon had left Elba. The restored Bourbon sovereign had disgusted the people of France; a conspiracy was formed against the impotent Louis XVIII.; and the exiled



emperor secretly invited to return. After an absence of about ten months, he left Elba, and landed at Cannes on the 1st of March, 1815, with about 1,000 men of his old guard, who had followed him into banishment. Wherever he appeared the army declared in his favour, and his march to Paris was a triumphal progress. The allies immediately signed a proclamation, which proscribed Napoleon as a public enemy, with whom neither peace nor truce could be concluded; and expressed their determination to employ the whole forces at their disposal, to prevent Europe from being again plunged into the abyss of revolution. The alarm thus excited by the common enemy, led to a settlement of the disputes between the allies themselves. Alexander agreed to accept of the grand-duchy of Warsaw, without the fortress of Thorn and its dependent territory, and with the exception of that portion ceded to Prussia. He also consented that Poland should not be incorporated with Russia, but should form a separate kingdom, preserving its own laws, institutions, language, and religion.

Louis XVIII. abandoned Paris at midnight on the 19th of March, and retired again into exile. On the evening of the 20th Napoleon arrived at the Tuileries, where he was received by a great number of his supporters with extraordinary enthusiasm. Still the great body of the citizens looked on with silent astonishment, and it soon became apparent that the emperor was recalled by a party and not by a nation. The people, longing for repose, feared the return of the hordes of Russia to ravage their fields and reoccupy their capital. The royalists of the south even took to arms in defence of the Bourbon cause; but this attempt to light up the flames of servile war happily proved abortive. The authority of the emperor would soon have been re-established in France, but for the overwhelming external opposition which was gathering its forces against him. Russia, Prussia, Austria, and England, each agreed to furnish 180,000 men to effect his overthrow. During this eventful year, Great Britain paid subsidies to her almost bankrupt allies, amounting to no less than £11,000,000.

Napoleon endeavoured, but in vain, to open a diplomatic intercourse with the allies. The emperor Alexander, who had hitherto been influenced by the remains of a kindly feeling towards him, was now the most decided of his opponents. "We can have

no peace," said he to a secret agent of Napoleon; "it is a mortal duel betwixt us; he has broken his word. I am freed from my engagement; Europe requires an example." Napoleon had probably expected this result, and he taxed the resources of his almost exhausted empire to the uttermost to prepare for war. At a great *fête* held in the Champ de Mai, he addressed to the people one of his spirit-stirring orations, in which he said—"Frenchmen! in traversing, amid the public joy, the different provinces of my empire to arrive in my capital, I trusted I could reckon on a long peace; nations are bound by treaties concluded by their governments, whatever they may be. My whole thoughts were then turned to the means of founding our liberty on a constitution resting on the wishes and interests of the people. Therefore it is that I have convoked the assembly of the Champ de Mai. I soon learned, however, that the princes who resist all popular rights, and disregard the wishes and interests of so many nations, were resolved on war."

On the 12th of June, Napoleon left Paris to assume the command of the army, which consisted of 122,000 men. Wellington with 80,000 men, and Blucher with 110,000, were in the field against him. Napoleon's design was to prevent the junction of these forces, and defeat them singly. While Wellington and Blucher were dreaming of an offensive campaign against him, they were suddenly called upon to defend themselves against the vigorous movements of Napoleon. On the 15th of June, he advanced upon Charleroi, which the Prussian troops, taken by surprise, abandoned at his approach. Marshal Ney, with 50,000 men, was dispatched by the emperor to Quatre Bras, the possession of which by the French would have probably cut off the communication between the British and Prussian armies. Napoleon himself followed the Prussian army, which was falling back towards Ligny. On the 16th, Napoleon attacked Blucher there, defeated him with a loss of 12,000 men, and drove him to retreat in great confusion towards Wavres. On the same day a severe encounter, though on a less extensive scale, took place between Wellington and Ney at Quatre Bras, the combatants numbering about 20,000 on each side. The misconduct of the Belgian troops had nearly led to a defeat of the allies; but the day was, to some extent, retrieved by the valour of the



British troops; and the forces, at this point, under the command of Wellington, after suffering a severe loss, retained possession of the field.

Wellington, however, deemed it expedient to retreat to Waterloo, where he trusted to be so near Blücher, that they might be able to assist each other in case of attack. As yet, the results of the campaign had been eminently favourable to Napoleon, who followed closely on the heels of Wellington; while 30,000 French, under Grouchy, pursued the Prussians. On the 18th, however, the great contest was brought to a final issue on the plains of Waterloo. This great battle has been often and most vividly described; its result is all that concerns us here, as the troops of Russia had no part in it. On witnessing the final overthrow of the old guard, Napoleon became pale as death, and, with an exclamation of despair, retreated from the field, in order to save himself from capture. The day terminated with the total rout of the French and their wild retreat, with the Prussian cavalry thundering at their heels. The French army was, in effect, destroyed; and few of the soldiers who fled from the fatal field of Waterloo, ever appeared in arms again. Thus was closed a war, or rather a succession of wars, which, commencing in 1792, had lasted, with but little interruption, for three-and-twenty years.

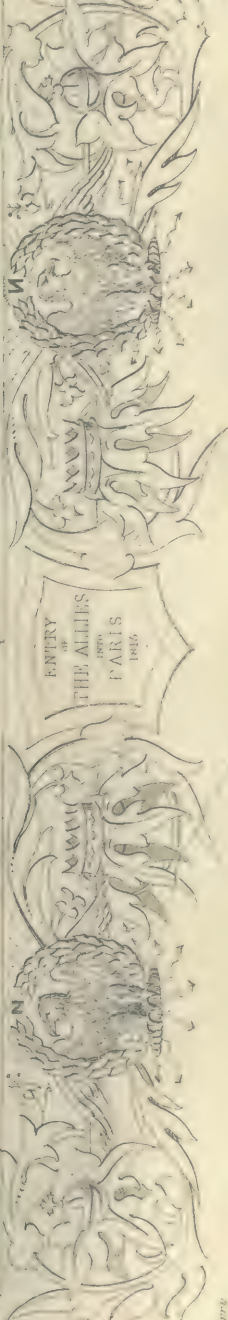
At the demand of the house of representatives, Napoleon again signed his abdication, and the former trusted that they would be able to restore a republic in France. It was not to be; Wellington and Blücher, at the head of their respective armies, were advancing rapidly upon Paris, which city was not in a condition to hold out against them. On the 3rd of July the city again capitulated, on the conditions that the French army should evacuate it, and that private property should be respected. On the 7th, the English and Prussian armies made their entrance into the French capital. There was no exultation as when Alexander and his ally occupied Paris so recently; the people looked on sadly and anxiously, for they felt humiliation for the present, and gloomy doubts as to the future. In the rear of foreign bayonets came Louis XVIII., a second time restored to a sullied throne by the enemies of his country. Even the royalist party was downcast; its blind devotion to a selfish

and incompetent family was overborne by its sense of national defeat and degradation.

Napoleon, unable to effect his escape to America, resolved to throw himself on the generosity of the English government, and surrendered to Captain Maitland, of the *Bellerophon*. It would have been noble in England to have respected the wish of the ruined emperor, now so helpless and deserted. But this country was acting in concert with Russia and Prussia, the sovereigns of which had resolved no longer to brook his presence in Europe; and it was therefore irrevocably decided that he should be removed to St. Helena, to fret out his heart, and die on a sea-girt rock, twelve hundred miles from any continent. He reached St. Helena on the 16th of October, where he remained until his death, which took place during a tremendous storm on the 4th of May, 1821.

Early in July, the emperors of Russia and Austria, and the king of Prussia, arrived at Paris, which they subjected to the just but melancholy humiliation of restoring the various objects of art in the museum of the Louvre, which had been pillaged by Napoleon from the various states that had fallen beneath his power. Then was seen the force which would, doubtless, have been brought against Napoleon, in the event of a prolongation of the struggle; no less than 800,000 armed men—Russians, Prussians, Austrians, English, Italians, and Spaniards—occupied the French soil. The power of the allies was irresistible, and their eagerness for spoil excessive. Such were the territorial demands of the conquerors, that the dominions of the newly-made sovereign seemed on the eve of dissolution. France was only saved by the mutual jealousies of the allies themselves. At length conflicting claims were arranged, and the second treaty of Paris was concluded in November, 1815. By it the French frontier was restored to the state in which it stood in 1790; and it was stipulated that 700,000,000 of francs (£28,000,000 sterling) were to be paid to the allied powers for the expenses of the war. Other heavy penalties were to be paid by the French; but these it is not within our province to relate. A display of Russian power was exhibited on the plains of Vertus, on the 10th of September. This was a great review of 160,000 Russian troops, 28,000 of which were cavalry. The Duke of Wellington did not, however, appear strikingly impressed with the military effi-





D. J. Ponce

J. H. Every

UNION OF  
CALIFORNIA







ciency of the Russians. "Well, Charles," said he to Sir Charles Stewart, afterwards Marquis of Londonderry, "you and I never saw such a sight before, and never shall again. The precision of the movements of these troops was more like the arrangements of a theatre than those of such an army; but still I think my little army would move round them in any direction while they were effecting a single charge."

The emperors of Russia and Austria, and the king of Prussia, before leaving Paris, signed an agreement or bond of union, to which, with much presumption, if not impiety, they gave the name of the "Holy Alliance." It was established at the suggestion of Alexander, ostensibly for the preservation of universal peace, on the principles of Christianity, but, in reality, for the extinction of all revolutionary principles, and the government of Europe on those of despotism. Alexander had carried his assumption of piety so far, that he may have succeeded in at last deceiving himself; yet this alliance had really no other object than to use religion as an instrument by which to crush the liberties of Europe, and establish the thrones of monarchs on the basis of a passive superstition. On the Christmas-day of 1815 Alexander issued a manifesto, in the names of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, solemnly declaring their "fixed resolution, both in the administration of their respective states, and in their political relations with every other government, to take for their guide the precepts of the holy religion of our Saviour—the precepts of justice, Christian charity, and peace; which, far from being applicable only to private concerns, must have an immediate influence on the councils of princes, and guide all their steps, as being the only means of consolidating human institutions, and remedying their imperfections." Alexander was induced to form this sinister league by the exhortations of the Baroness Krudener, a lady whom religious excitement had brought to, if not within, the verge of insanity. She had assumed the character of a prophetess, and contended that she had a mission to establish the reign of Christ upon earth. Having followed Alexander to Paris, she declared that he was appointed regenerator of the world, and succeeded in establishing some degree of influence over him; so much so, indeed, that at this period the emperor passed whole days at Paris in a mystical communication of sentiments with her.

The "Holy Alliance" was soon acceded to by all the principal powers of Europe, with the exception of England, the government of which refused to debase religion into a mere instrument of state-craft. Little credit was, however, due to the prince-regent or his ministers on that account; for when, on the 26th of September, 1815, Mr. (since Lord) Brougham moved for a copy of the terms of the alliance (which he stigmatised as nothing but a convention for the enslaving of mankind, under the mask of piety and religion), Lord Castlereagh replied, that a copy of the treaty had been communicated to the prince-regent, who entirely approved of its principles, but had refrained from giving in his adhesion, because "the forms of the British constitution prevented him from acceding to it." Happily the "Holy Alliance" was not of permanent duration. The congress of Aix-la-Chapelle, which met in 1818, and the congresses at Troppau and Laybach, respectively held in 1820 and 1821, were conducted on its principles; but it was everywhere the subject of execration; and eventually expired amidst the hatred and scorn of Europe.

On leaving Paris, Alexander proceeded to Warsaw, where he established a constitution for Poland; which, with an apparent policy, granted to its people more freedom than the Russians themselves enjoyed. Catholicism was recognised as the religion of the state; but all Dissidents were placed on an equality with Romanists as to civil rights: the liberty of the press was permitted; the legislative authority was vested in the king and two chambers; and judges were to be elected, partly by the king, and partly by the Palatinates. On a subsequent occasion he thus addressed the chambers:—"Prove to your contemporaries that liberal institutions, the principles of which are confounded by some with those disastrous doctrines which, in our days, have threatened the social system with a frightful catastrophe—prove that they are not delusions; but that, put in practice with good faith, and directed by pure intentions towards a useful and conservative object, they are perfectly in accordance with order, and insure the prosperity of nations." The Poles were, however, not to be lured by this language into a behaviour sufficiently submissive for the taste of Alexander; therefore, in the year 1820, he abruptly closed the chambers, and no new diet was summoned till 1825. Indeed, it must be ad-



mitted, that the Poles left their ruler little choice between governing despotically or not governing at all.

The insurrection of the Greeks in 1820, against the tyranny of the sultan, though publicly condemned by Alexander, was attributed by Turkey to the secret encouragement of Russia, and threatened a renewal of hostilities between those countries. Alexander was, however, indisposed for war, and resolved to adhere, at least until a more promising opportunity, to the principles of the "Holy Alliance." "Would you have believed," said he to the eccentric French writer, Chateaubriand, "as our enemies are so fond of asserting, that the alliance is only a word, intended to cover ambition? That might have received a colour of truth under the old order of things; but now all private interests disappear when the civilisation of the world is endangered. Henceforward there can be no English, French, Russian, Prussian, or Austrian policy; there can only be a general policy, involving the salvation of all, admitted in common by kings and people.\* It is for me, the first of all, to declare my appreciation of the principles on which I founded the 'Holy Alliance.' An opportunity presents; it is the Greek insurrection. Certainly no event appeared more adapted to my personal interests, to those of my subjects, and to the feelings and prejudices of the Russians, than a religious war against Turkey; but in the troubles of the Peloponnesus I saw *revolutionary symptoms, and from that moment I held aloof.*"

The latter years of the life of Alexander were passed in an attempt at repose, after the wild turmoil arising from the wars he had been engaged in with Napoleon, and in promoting the internal advancement of the empire. Moscow rose from amidst its ashes, and was built in a more commodious and splendid manner. The emperor also gave much attention to the promotion of a kind of guarded education, in which the principles of devotion to the church, and passive obedience to the monarch, were carefully instilled, and from which everything foreign was rejected as dangerous. The emperor also caused extraordinary precautions to be taken against revolutionary intrigues; and, by an ukase of the 12th of August, 1822, he

\* This is terrible rhodomontade. Alexander either talked nonsense, out of a sinister policy, or he was strangely ignorant of the opinions and principles prevalent throughout the greatest part of Europe.

prohibited all secret societies, and closed all the lodges of Freemasons throughout the empire. For the same reason, the missionary societies in the German provinces of the empire were abolished; and a report that dangerous intrigues had taken place in some of the corps of the army, was positively contradicted by authority. Great rigour was exercised by the police, especially subsequently to 1823, towards everything suspected of an irreligious or revolutionary tendency. An ukase, dated November, 1824, even directed *Admiral Schischkoff* to be especially vigilant with regard to religious writings! What the state of the country must have been, in which almost irresponsible power in such a direction was given to a naval officer, we may well conceive. The censorship of the press was exercised with great rigour, and the academies placed under very strict superintendence. In 1821, four professors of the university of St. Petersburg were called to account for the contents of their lectures. Regulations for the importation of foreign books were rendered so strict and onerous as to be almost prohibitory. Under the pretence of excluding incompetent persons and adventurers from being employed as teachers in families, notice was given, that such persons who could not produce a certificate of their qualifications—in other words, of their political and theological orthodoxy—should be immediately discharged; and that any families who retained them should be punished by the infliction of a fine of a hundred roubles. These oppressive measures were chiefly carried into execution by General Araktcheieff, a Russian officer, whose narrow mind and arbitrary temper fitted him to become an oppressive instrument of despotism. During the latter years of the reign of the emperor, his duties were mostly delegated to this man, whose name became a word of terror throughout the empire.

Alexander was, in fact, absolutely haunted by the ghost of the revolution he had done so much to crush in France. The entrance of his army into Paris was eventually fatal to his peace of mind. There the officers of his army were inoculated with the republican notions of the French, and became dissatisfied with a government the extent of whose despotism they had not till then understood. Alexander lived in constant dread of conspiracy, and of sharing the fate of his father. Spies were set everywhere; and they were frequently persons of such a rank in life, as



to disarm the suspicion that it was possible they could descend to such detestable employment.

The health of the emperor gave way under this constant excitement, and he spent much of the latter part of his reign in travelling. He was also much affected by the death of an illegitimate daughter, to whom he was most affectionately attached. On the 13th of September, 1825, he left St. Petersburg on an excursion to the south of Russia, ostensibly to visit the empress, who was then residing at Taganrog for the benefit of her health. He was observed to look frequently back at the capital with a melancholy air, and to seem altogether out of spirits. There existed sufficient cause for this depression; for he had received information of the existence of an extensive conspiracy for the purpose of overthrowing the imperial form of government, and putting him and his family to death. During the journey he suffered much from depression and superstitious fears. These were increased by the sight of a comet. "Ilga," he inquired of an old and faithful servant, "have you seen the new star? Do you know that a comet always presages misfortune? But God's will be done."

Shortly after his arrival at Taganrog, Alexander proceeded to the Crimea. During this journey he paused at a picturesque spot named Orianda; and observed, that if he retired from the affairs of government, it was there he would wish to live; thus seeming to derive a secret pleasure in the thought of abdication. In the preceding year he had been attacked with erysipelas, which began in the leg, and, spreading upwards, was attended with occasional fever and delirium. From this he had to some extent recovered, when, while at Taganrog, he was attacked with the intermittent fever common to the Crimea. Trusting to the natural strength of his constitution, he obstinately refused to submit to the remedies which his physicians prescribed. It is said, that this conduct arose partly from a disgust for life, induced by further particulars which he received concerning the conspiracy, and the presumed design to assassinate him. On one occasion, when Sir James Wylie urged him to take some medicine, he remarked, "My friend, it is the state of my nerves to which you must attend; they are in frightful disorder."—"Alas!" responded the physician, "that happens more frequently to kings than to ordinary

men."—"Yes," assented the emperor, "but with me, in particular, there are many special reasons, and, at the present hour, more so than ever." Some days afterwards, while suffering much from pain, he gazed intently on Sir James, and exclaimed, in an excited manner, "Oh, my friend, what an act—what a horrible act! The monsters!—the ungrateful monsters! I designed nothing but their happiness."

When at length the emperor, overcome by entreaties, yielded to the treatment of his physicians, and allowed leeches to be applied, it was too late. During the last few days that he continued to breathe, he was insensible; and on the morning of the 1st of December, 1825, he expired. He had almost reached his forty-eighth year, and had occupied the imperial throne for a quarter of a century. For some time, a rumour prevailed in foreign countries, that his death had been caused by poison; but it has been well ascertained, that there was no ground whatever for this suspicion.

The character of Alexander is not an easy one to trace correctly, for it was a union of apparent contradictions: in it a meretricious, and for the most part assumed, liberalism vainly struggled for freedom of action in the presence of a real and active despotism. The pretensions of Alexander, and his flatterers, have deceived many writers, who, unaccustomed to the necessary habit of psychological analysis, have fallen into the error of representing him as he *seemed to be*, rather than as he was. That he possessed the manners of a gentleman, and was highly polished in this respect, is undeniable. His manners were graceful, courteous, and condescending, without any of that frigid, palpable assumption of superiority, which is not pleasing even in princes. With the manners of a gentleman, he possessed also the accomplishments of one; but in no respect was he either solid or profound. The chief feature of his character was his duplicity; which is seldom a quality of an enlarged mind or a noble nature. An external liberality was mingled with a deep and ineradicable selfishness. Even his ambition was of a mean and acquisitive kind, and directed always towards the extension of territory, than to that glory which great men toil for. His admirers have spoken much of what they call his benevolence; but it consisted rather of the absence of cruelty, and of the occasional exhibition of a popularity-seeking



amiability. That he could be resolutely vindictive, is evinced by the unbending temper in which he carried on the war against his former friend Napoleon, and the obduracy with which he refused all terms of peace, and left the invading army to perish in its retreat from a fearful accumulation of horrors. He was, in fact, an amiable despot; but one whose whole reign was devoted to building up despotism on a surer and more enduring basis.

Alexander was enthusiastic, imaginative, superstitious, and, probably at times, really pious; but yet singularly given to that insincerity in this direction which has obtained the obnoxious but expressive name of "cant." The institution of that solemn, if not even blasphemous, mockery of real religion, the "Holy Alliance," was a most offensive instance of this. There is not only a wickedness, but a danger, in converting religion into a mere bulwark of the state, and an instrument of tyranny. A reaction invariably follows, earlier or later, against conventional piety, when it is used as a means of oppressive coercion. The present state of the educated classes in Russia, indicates that they are proceeding to the other extreme, and that a contempt for palpable superstition, in connection with state-craft, is leading them to trample upon and discard religion altogether. The Russian peasantry have a boundless credulity with respect to superstition; but the gentry and nobles, though they like the display of the external pomp of their gaudy religion, are fast becoming freethinkers.

Alexander did something for education; but it was for education as he pleased to have it. He founded or reorganised seven universities, and established 204 gymnasia, and above 2,000 schools of an inferior order; but nothing was taught in them of which he did not approve, or suspected of a liberal tendency. This was an attempt to dwarf down the intellect of the empire to a very narrow standard—to force it into an orthodox yet questionable channel, and to check its expansion. The severity of his censorship of the press, and his inquisitorial jealousy of foreign books, we have already spoken of. This arose from a morbid dread of revolutionary principles, which was perhaps natural enough in an absolute monarch at that time; but was still a weakness and a cause of tyranny. It is therefore highly objectionable to find writers of this age applaud such conduct, and bestow on it the

titles of "virtue" and "greatness." The word "great" could not be applied to Alexander with respect to any one quality he possessed. His mind was scarcely advanced beyond mediocrity; and he was utterly destitute of that political prescience which great statesmen so frequently possess, and of which he had so brilliant an example in the emperor Napoleon. The Russian monarch died while still in the autumn of life; yet, as a ruler, he had lived too long. He had deserted the liberal principles which he professed rather than acted upon in his younger days; and the system which he laboured to create, of despotism founded upon superstition and the personal abasement of his subjects, gave symptoms of decay even during his own life. Where no constitutional means of remedying abuses exist, revolution is the natural resort of an oppressed people. It is idle to talk of the horrors which commonly accompany it; that perversion of power which brought about the revolution is responsible for them. Had Alexander lived another ten years, or even five, he would probably have shared the fate of his father Paul. Yet he might have been more popular, and personally loved, than any sovereign who ever occupied the imperial throne of Russia, had he but known how to have trusted his subjects, and to have progressed with the spirit of the times. That must advance; its onward movement is inevitable; and woe to the monarch who blindly devotes all his energies to drive it back!

Alexander had commenced this fatal and foredoomed struggle. He had placed the imperial will in obstinate yet trembling opposition to the natural laws which regulate the development of nations and the expansion of the human mind! What was the result? A blighted life, a constant dread of assassination, shattered nerves, a ceaseless gnawing at the heart, and a premature death. His vain attempts to crush liberalism—to drill the minds of his people as he did the movements of his soldiers—to stifle thought—to keep Russia always a child, when it was apparent that its growth to manhood was inevitable—to surround the press with multiplied and galling restrictions, enforced by bayonets and prison cells, and to chain up education like some wild thing, to be petted in bondage and dreaded when at liberty—caused him to leave the empire he desired to consolidate and render more united and passively obedient than



any other in the world, on the eve of a revolution which threatened to overthrow a despotic government altogether.

The czar has been spoken of as the high-principled, pure-minded advocate of order, and the magnanimous hero who arrested and crushed the devouring ambition of Napoleon. No merit is due to Alexander for his efforts in this direction; for, with respect to it, he was, at best, but "the accident of an accident." The attentive reader of the foregoing narrative will recognise the truth of the statement, that his motives were merely those of selfishness and fear. It was not until the emperor began to dread revolution at home, that he assumed to become an apostle of order abroad. Not until he had unjustly seized Finland, without a cause and without a blush, and failed in an unjust attempt to seize a great part of Turkey, that he became shocked at the aggressive spirit of Napoleon. But a very few years before, he had eagerly grasped at the offer to unite the brute energies of Russia to the military prowess of France, and to share with its great soldier the spoils of the world! The names of Tilsit and Erfurth cannot be erased from the pages of history. Alexander, during his friendly connection with Napoleon, acted with a perfidy, and a grasping, dishonest acquisitiveness utterly inconsistent with an honourable nature. He was ready to play the robber's part towards all his neighbours; and he despoiled his brother-in-law, the king of Sweden, of Finland with as much indifference as he received a Polish province plundered from his friend Frederic William of Prussia, and with as much readiness as he issued an edict prematurely annexing Moldavia and Wallachia to the Russian empire! Alexander, like a repentant robber, who finds the law cannot be defied with impunity, only turned politically honest when he found that dishonesty was dangerous, and that his accomplice in guilt was far his superior in dexterity, and not disposed to spare even him. To talk sounding nonsense about the honour and virtue of such a potentate as this, is an insult to the sacred name of truth and to the judgment of mankind!

The moderation of Alexander on the occasion of the entrance of the allies into Paris, has been much commended, and in some respects deservedly so. He acted with humanity, and bore in mind that his quarrel was not with the French people, but with

their ruler. But this moderation, however estimable and apparently generous, was chiefly the result of policy. He did not desire to annihilate France, or to see it other than one of the great powers of Europe; it was not his interest to enrich Austria and Prussia with its spoils. But the cupidity of the Russian emperor was sufficiently active even at this period. He did not exhibit any moderation towards Poland, the sovereignty of which was ceded to him by his allies only because they were well aware that sooner than abandon his claim to it, he was ready to plunge Europe again into war. The political moderation of Alexander was, in fact, for the most part a delusion, and a mask beneath which he endeavoured to hide his aggressive intentions. Whenever this imperial Tartuffe desired to despoil his neighbours, he always assumed a more than ordinary amount of moderation and forbearance, and uttered the fulsome language of an obtrusive and pretentious piety.

Russia progressed during the reign of Alexander; and it must have been a strangely obtuse nation indeed, not to have progressed during five-and-twenty years of such intellectual activity and excitement as then prevailed throughout Europe. But this national advancement is to be attributed rather to the inevitable course of events, than to any exertions of the czar. It would have taken place to a much larger extent had the great Catherine still swayed the imperial sceptre; and to as great a one if any prince not deficient in the ordinary intelligence and firmness of a man, had held the place of Alexander. In matters of education, and political and social amelioration, his influence was rather that of a dragwheel than a spur. Certainly, he patronised science so long as it merely gathered facts, and did not make any speculative application of them—science, in a word, dis severed from its companion, thought; he patronised painting and the arts, and promoted agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. Such a course, however, is both the interest and the duty of a monarch; a small and feeble return to his people for the vast distinction and power he receives from them. The performance of such a duty does not give him a right to become a stumbling-block in the path of his people towards a rational civilisation and a moderate freedom, or to sit like a nightmare upon the bosom of the young intellect of the empire, while it



gasped and struggled to release itself from the terrible oppression, and to develop its energies unchecked by the iron hand of ignorant and trembling power. Alexander was a huge political pretence, a moral and pious sham, and a despot all the more dangerous because he always strove to hide the cloven hoof of tyranny beneath the gown and cowl of a pretended sanctimony. For awhile this assumption deceived his people; but when the excitement of the great war with France had cooled down—when judgment was partially dissevered from passion, they found out the hollowness of his pretensions; and Alexander, who had ever sought to win the applause of his people with as much assiduity as an actor upon

the stage does that of his audience, died unmourned and even unregretted. The world has no sympathy with an unmasked hypocrite; and the educated classes of Russia had found out their emperor. Yet such is the influence of pretentious and hollow piety, and so difficult is it to destroy the false claims to respect of insincerity of this nature, that we believe the character of Alexander has not been drawn with unsparing truth until the appearance of this summary of it. It is a sad quality of common minds, that they ever busy themselves with composing elaborate adulation of those who occupy the high places of society, and of meanly refraining from all mention of their vices.

#### CHAPTER LV.

THE GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE; HIS SECOND MARRIAGE, AND RENUNCIATION OF HIS RIGHT TO THE THRONE; NICHOLAS VAINLY URGES HIS BROTHER TO RESUME HIS RIGHT; CONSTANTINE IS PROCLAIMED EMPEROR, BUT CONFIRMS HIS RENUNCIATION; AFTER AN INTERREGNUM OF THREE WEEKS NICHOLAS CONSENTS TO ASCEND THE THRONE; OUTBREAK OF THE CONSPIRACY; DECISION OF NICHOLAS; FIERCE CONFLICT IN THE PLACE OF THE SENATE; SUPPRESSION OF THE INSURRECTION; EXECUTION OF THE PRINCIPAL CONSPIRATORS; EXPIATORY CEREMONIAL ON THE THEATRE OF THE REVOLT; NICHOLAS ATTEMPTS TO PURIFY THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE; HIS CORONATION; HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

As the emperor Alexander left no children, his brother, the Grand-duke Constantine, was the legitimate heir to the throne. The second son of Paul, and the grandson of the illustrious Catherine, Constantine was born at St. Petersburg on the 8th of May, 1779. Catherine had bestowed upon him the baptismal name of Constantine, which was generally considered as an indication of her wish that in his person should be fulfilled a prophecy current among the Greeks, that a Constantine should once more reign at Constantinople. Every effort of policy with respect to the East was directed to effect a restoration of the Byzantine empire, as an appendage of the imperial house of Russia. Greek children were placed around the grand-duke even from his cradle, for the purpose of interesting him in their native language; but he never evinced any other feeling than that of dislike to it. As he grew up, his favourite study was military exercises. At the age of seventeen he was united to a

lady of fifteen, the Princess Juliana of Saxe-Coburg. The manners of Constantine were savage, and his inclinations fiercely despotic. He possessed scarcely less excitability and eccentricity than his father Paul, whom he resembled in person, and almost surpassed in ugliness. His features had the Tartar cast, and were deeply scarred by the small-pox. Yet, though occasionally brutal in his manners, it is said he sometimes exhibited an air of extreme polish, combined with a winning and attractive manner. This, however, was seldom; for he had nothing mild or gentle in his nature. A distinguished living writer observes—"He rivalled Richard Cœur-de-Lion in his valour in the field; but he surpassed him, also, in the vehemence with which he ruled the cabinet, and the acts of tyranny by which both his public administration and private life were characterised. Violent, capricious, and irritable, he could never brook contradiction; and when inflamed by passion, indulged his vehement



disposition by frightful and disgraceful acts of cruelty. He was an untamed savage, armed with the power, and animated by the imperious disposition of an Eastern sultan, imperfectly veiled over by the chivalrous manners of modern Europe. Yet was the savage not destitute of generous sentiments; he could occasionally do noble things; and though the discipline he maintained among his troops was extremely severe, yet it was redeemed, and their affections won, by frequent acts of kindness."

The manners of Constantine disgusted the lady to whom he had been united; and, four years after their union, they separated by mutual consent. The grand-duke was much attached to, and greatly under the influence of, his brother, the emperor Alexander; during whose reign he won great distinction by his bravery and military qualities, especially at the battle of Austerlitz and on the sanguinary field of Eylau; he was also present in the campaigns of 1812, 1813, and 1814, and accompanied the victorious march of his countrymen from Moscow to Paris.

In the year 1820, the charms of a Polish lady led Constantine to a step which at once changed both his destiny and that of the Russian empire. The Countess Joanna Grudzynska was a fragile beauty, in delicate health, and apparently but little likely to win the regard of a rough and boisterous soldier. Yet the grand-duke became so fascinated with her, that he determined to overcome every obstacle that lay in the way of making her his wife. After some difficulty, he procured a decree of the synod of the Russian church, confirmed by an imperial ukase, by which he was divorced from the Princess of Saxe-Coburg, with liberty to marry again. He immediately afterwards married the Countess Grudzynska, though with the left hand—a ceremony by which, though she became his legal wife, she did not become a grand-duchess; and it was understood that her children could not succeed to the throne. In fact, Constantine had only obtained his brother Alexander's consent to the divorce, by entering into a solemn engagement with him to renounce his right of succession to the crown in favour of his younger brother, Nicholas, as the only means of preventing ultimate confusion and doubt as to the right of succession.

The agreement was, however, a secret

one; and some affirm, that even Nicholas himself was ignorant of it. Certainly, the general supposition was, that though Constantine's children by the Polish countess were set aside, the rights of the grand-duke remained intact; and he was always regarded as heir-presumptive to the czar. He had, however, left a written renunciation of his right of succession, which had been deposited by Alexander in a sealed packet, and confided to the care of the president of the imperial council. According to the command of the emperor, this packet was opened immediately after his death, in the presence of the council. Within was found a letter from Constantine to his brother, dated January, 1822. It contained the following strange and humiliating words:—"Conscious that I do not possess either the genius, the talents, or the strength necessary to fit me for the dignity of sovereign, to which my birth would give me a right, I entreat your imperial majesty to transfer that right to him to whom it belongs after me, and thus insure for ever the stability of the empire. As for myself, I shall add, by this renunciation, a new guarantee and a new force to the engagement which I spontaneously and solemnly contracted on the occasion of my divorce from my first wife. All the circumstances in which I find myself, strengthen my determination to adhere to this resolution, which will prove to the empire, and to the whole world, the sincerity of my sentiments." There was a reply by Alexander to this communication, simply without a word of comment, accepting the offer it conveyed; and also a declaration, that, in pursuance of it, the Grand-duke Nicholas was to ascend the throne of Russia.

The council accordingly declared the latter to be emperor, and invited him to attend to receive their homage. This he refused. "I am not emperor," he observed, "and will not become so at my brother's expense. If, maintaining his renunciation, the Grand-duke Constantine persists in the sacrifice of his rights, in that case, but in that only, will I exercise mine by accepting the throne." As the entreaties of the council were unable to move Nicholas from this determination, they obeyed him, saying, with a very equivocal kind of loyalty—"You are our emperor; we owe you an absolute obedience. Since, then, you command us to recognise the Grand-duke Constantine as our legiti-



mate sovereign, we have no alternative but to obey your command." Constantine was therefore proclaimed emperor at St. Petersburg, and the usual oath of fidelity to him administered to the guards in the space in front of the Winter Palace.

The news of Alexander's death reached Warsaw some time before it arrived at St. Petersburg. On the receipt of it, Constantine sent his younger brother, the Grand-duke Michael, to the capital, to confirm his previous renunciation of the crown. Still Nicholas hesitated; for he knew himself to be less popular than his elder brother; and was aware, that in the event of a struggle taking place, Constantine would be almost certain to prevail. He desired, therefore, to have the most convincing proofs of his brother's voluntary renunciation of the imperial sceptre, before he ventured to accept it. He accordingly prevailed on Michael to return to Warsaw, with the intelligence that Constantine had already been proclaimed emperor. Michael, on his journey back, was met by a courier from Constantine, with the answer of the latter to the despatches he had received from St. Petersburg; and an intimation, that the resolution of the grand-duke was inflexible.

It was not, however, until the 24th of December, after an interregnum of three weeks' duration, that Nicholas consented to ascend the throne which was the inheritance of his elder brother. It was time he did so; for the conspiracy, the discovery of which had shortened the life of Alexander, was on the point of breaking out. Since 1817, secret political societies had existed in Russia, with the object of subverting the government, and establishing representative institutions and a constitutional monarchy in its stead. The directing committee of the conspirators was held at St. Petersburg, and presided over by Prince Troubetzkoi. Ryleif, Prince Obolouski, Colonel Pestel, and the brothers Mouravieff, were the most distinguished leaders; while the ordinary members comprised a great number of military officers. The chief conspirators are admitted, by those not favourable to their conduct or principles, to have been amongst the most highly educated and patriotic men in Russia.

The death of Alexander, at the time when the enterprise was about to be put into action, disconcerted the conspirators.

The prolongation of the interregnum revived their hopes, and they resolved to take advantage of the strange dispute between the two brothers. They therefore resolved to advocate the cause of Constantine, to win the common soldiers in his name, and, when they had placed him on the throne, to demand an entire change of government, on the representative principle, as their reward. The final refusal of Constantine to accept the throne, and the betrayal of their scheme to Nicholas, decided the conspirators on an instant revolt; and Prince Troubetzkoi was named dictator. "You see," said Ryleif, "we are betrayed; the court is partly aware of our designs, but they do not know the whole. Our forces are sufficient; our scabbards are broken; we can no longer hide our sabres."

The 26th of December had been appointed as the day on which the oath of allegiance to the emperor Nicholas should be administered to the troops. Several regiments took it with the customary docility of Russian soldiers; but this was not the case with the few devoted to the conspirators. The troops comprising them were falsely informed that Constantine had not resigned, but had been placed in irons; that he was their rightful czar, and, if reinstated by their means, would double their pay. To these assurances they responded with loud shouts of "Constantine for ever!" The number of these men, however, was but small; and those who assembled, armed, behind the statue of Peter the Great, in the Place of the Senate, to assert the rights of Constantine, did not exceed 1,800 men; though they were surrounded by a great crowd of armed civilians, who shared their enthusiasm and joined in their shouts.

Nicholas, on receiving information of these proceedings, acted with a courage which probably saved not only his crown but his life. Placing himself at the head of a regiment of the guards, he proceeded towards the scene of insurrection. On his way, he met a column marching to join the rebels. "Good-day, my children," said he to them, using the parental form of address customary with the czars when addressing their troops. "Hurrah! Constantine!" was the answer he received. Though pale as marble, Nicholas exhibited no indication of fear, but addressed the same salute to another detachment of troops which was



following their companions. These men remained silent; and the emperor, with great presence of mind, in a loud voice, gave the command, "Wheel to the right—march!" The instinct of discipline prevailed; and the men turned about, and retraced their steps, as if they had not deviated from their allegiance to him whose voice they now obeyed.

The military insurgents at length numbered upwards of 3,000 men, and continued to fill the air with shouts of "Long live the emperor Constantine!" But at this critical moment the leaders were wanting, and Prince Troubetzkoi had abandoned his post and fled, even leaving his papers undestroyed. Ryleif was there; but he was a civilian, and could not take the command of the troops, and he lost time for action in seeking Troubetzkoi. The emperor had with him no less than 13,000 troops; but he hesitated to command them to act against the rebels. The brave General Milaradovitch, "the Murat of Russia," advanced alone amongst them, in the hope of being able by his personal influence to subdue the mutiny. One of the conspirators immediately fired at him, and he fell mortally wounded from his horse. Nicholas yet hesitated to shed the blood of Russian soldiers by Russian hands; and he sent forward the Archbishop of St. Petersburg, bearing the cross, and followed by a great body of the clergy, to produce submission by working upon the religious emotions of the insurgents. The attempt failed; the voice of the aged prelate was rendered inaudible by the rolling of drums and the shouts of the soldiers. The leaders now set up a cry of "Constantine and the constitution!" The last word, which was a foreign one in Russia, greatly perplexed the ignorant soldiers, who, in fact, had no conception whatever of its real meaning. "What is that?" said the men to each other. "Do you not know?" said one; "it is the empress!" The word has a feminine termination, and was supposed, by the speaker and many of his comrades, to refer to Constantine's Polish wife. Others among these poor men entertained a different opinion, and said, "It is the carriage in which the emperor is to drive at his coronation."

The short winter day was drawing to a close; and Nicholas, having exhausted all pacific means of terminating the revolt, ordered his troops to act against the insur-

gents. The latter were assailed both in front and flank by cavalry and infantry. They fought with a desperate bravery; and the struggle was prolonged for a considerable period. The cavalry were repulsed; the Grand-duke Michael narrowly escaped being cut down by one of the conspirators; while another eagerly sought out Nicholas, for the purpose of dispatching him, though without effect. As time wore on, and the rebels still remained in possession of their strong position, the emperor ordered the cannon, hitherto concealed by a body of cavalry, to be unmasked. The threatening mouths of the guns were pointed directly against the insurgent square, who were again summoned to surrender. They refused, and the artillery was discharged over their heads, for the purpose of intimidating them. As none of these fearless men were injured, they raised a cheer, and mocked their assailants. Nicholas then ordered a point-blank discharge. The cannoniers hesitated to inflict this butchery upon their comrades; and it was not until the Grand-duke Michael with his own hand discharged the first gun, that they performed their painful duty. The effect was terrible; and the grapeshot did fearful execution on the compact living square through which it ploughed. Yet these unhappy men, with a heroism which deserved success, still bore up bravely, and it was not until the tenth volley that they broke and fled. They were pursued by the cavalry, whose sabres reeked with the blood of their own countrymen. By six o'clock 700 were made prisoners, and the rest slain or dispersed. "What a beginning of a reign!" exclaimed Nicholas, as he returned sadly towards the palace. On his arrival, the empress fell fainting into his arms, and, from that hour, she was afflicted with a nervous disorder which medical art has been unable to subdue.

The regiments implicated in the revolt were politically pardoned by Nicholas, with the exception of the men whom he considered most guilty; these being sent to the Caucasus to combat with the fierce mountaineers of that locality. Towards the leaders of the conspiracy he adopted a very different course. The most active of them were immediately arrested, and a commission of inquiry appointed to investigate the extent and nature of the disaffection. It is generally admitted that this investigation was conducted in a vindictive and minutely



inquisitorial manner. In some instances, persuasion was employed, and in others intimidation, for the purpose of extorting statements which might criminate others. The proceedings of the commissioners were conducted in private, and continued through a period of several months. They resulted in a report, that a conspiracy existed of a far more dangerous and extensive kind than had been supposed.

It is highly probable that such was the case as regards the educated classes of society in Russia, and especially amongst the military. These had returned from their campaigns in France and Germany, for the most part enchanted with the liberal ideas they heard there for the first time. "They had," observes Alison, "stood side by side with the ardent youth of the Teutonic universities, whose feelings had been warmed by the fervour of the Tugenbund,\* whose imaginations had been kindled by the poetry of Körner: at the capture of Paris they had seen the world in transports at the magnanimous words of the czar in praise of liberal institutions; many of them had shared in his reception in London, and witnessed the marvellous spectacle of a free people emerging unscathed from a contest from which they themselves had been extricated only by committing their capital to the flames. Immense was the influence which these circumstances came ere long to exercise on the highly educated youth of Russia, speaking French and English as well as natives, associating with the very highest society of these nations, and contrasting the varied excitements and intellectual pleasures at their command, with the stillness and monotony, save from physical sensations, of their own fettered land. They saw civilisation on its bright side only; they had basked in its sunshine; they had not felt its shade. They had returned home, as so many travellers do, to the cold regions of the north, discontented with their own country, and passionately desirous of a change. These sentiments were dangerous; their expression might consign the utterer at once to Siberia: they were shrouded in silence, like a secret passion in the female heart from a jealous husband; but like all other emotions, they only became the more violent from the necessity of being concealed, and came in

many noble breasts entirely to absorb the mind, to the exclusion of all objects of pacific interest or ambition."

Such sentiments, stifled beneath a despotic government which had emasculated and neutralised the press, placed education in fetters whose iron was ill-concealed by the thin gilding which they bore, and watched every utterance of original thought with the savage glare of a tiger regarding its destined prey;—the entertainment of such sentiments, under such conditions, could scarcely produce any other result than insurrection or revolution. Had the Russian people, or the masses which in that vast empire stand for a people, been as well prepared as the educated classes, the latter must have taken place. But the peasantry and soldiery were not awakened: it was therefore but an insurrection; and this seldom, if ever, succeeds in the face of a powerful government.

Immediately after the suppression of the insurrection at St. Petersburg, an outbreak took place in the army of the south, and in that stationed on the Polish frontier. Colonel Pestel and the two Mouravieffs, who had adopted the principles of republicanism, were the respective leaders. But the common soldiers, though attached to their officers, had no desire for change, and no idea of effecting a revolution. Sergius Mouravieff succeeded in causing his regiment to revolt, by persuading the men to take up arms for Constantine; but he and other of the leaders made an attempt to introduce the shout of "Long live the Slavonic republic!" The ignorant soldiery had no idea of the meaning of the words. "We are quite willing," remarked an old grenadier, "to call out 'Long live the Slavonic republic!' but who is to be our emperor?" It was in vain that the officers spoke to them of liberty, and that some priests read passages from the Old Testament, to show that democracy was the form of government most agreeable to the Deity. The soldiers only recurred to the question, "Who is to be the emperor? Constantine or Nicholas Paulovitch?"

The result of an insurrection in which the convictions of the mass were adverse to the principles they were presumed to contend for, could not long be doubted. It was suppressed with but little bloodshed, and the leading conspirators were arrested. They were all placed on their trial before the commissioners appointed to examine

\* That is, the "League of Virtue;" a name given to a secret society, or rather a number of affiliated societies which spread throughout Germany.



into the details of the affair, and thirty-six of them sentenced to death, and 130 others to imprisonment and lesser penalties. Of these, five only were executed; the punishment of the rest being commuted to exile, accompanied with hard labour, in Siberia. The five victims were Pestel, Ryleif, Sergius Mouravieff, Bestoujif-Rumine, and Kakhofski. These unhappy persons—all men of education, great talents, and benevolent, though perhaps extravagant, views—were condemned to the revolting death of being broken on the wheel. The actual execution of such a sentence was felt to be a barbarity inconsistent with the civilisation and feelings of the age; and Nicholas, prudently bowing to this general impression, changed their doom into that of death by hanging. Even in this, however, there was a refined cruelty, as it was an unusual mode of execution in Russia, and regarded as peculiarly degrading; the more so by men of cultivated minds, who had expected to meet the fate of soldiers. Prior to their execution they were examined by Nicholas in person. "What had your emperor done to you?" said he to one of them. "We had not an emperor," was the reply; "we have had two. One was your brother, and the other Aratchieff." Proceeding in a similar strain, he was interrupted by the Grand-duke Michael, who brutally exclaimed, "That man should have his mouth stopped with a bayonet." "You asked just now," continued the prisoner, "why we wanted a constitution? It was, that such things might not be said." Nicholas then questioned Bestoujif, who replied, "I repent of nothing I have done; I die satisfied, and soon to be avenged." Struck with the courage of his answers, the emperor said, "I have the power to pardon you; and if I felt assured you would be a faithful subject, I would gladly do so." "Why, sire," responded Bestoujif, "that is precisely what we complain of; the emperor can do anything, and is bound by no law. In the name of God, allow justice to have free course, and let the fate of your subjects no longer depend on your caprice or your impressions for a moment."

The executions took place on the 25th of July, and created a great and painful sensation at St. Petersburg, where no capital punishment had been inflicted for a period of eighty years. The gallows was erected on the edge of the rampart of the citadel; and it was deemed necessary to have a

large body of troops on the spot. Great sympathy existed for the victims, and there were few spectators besides the soldiers. With a revolting cruelty, the sufferers were compelled to look on for a whole hour while the preparations were being completed for the execution. The thirty-one conspirators whose sentence of death had been commuted to that of exile to Siberia, were marched round the scaffold, after which their epaulets were torn off, their uniforms taken from them, their swords broken over their heads, and they were dressed in the coarse garb of convicts. The five who were to suffer then ascended the scaffold with firm steps and an undaunted air. The signal was given, and Pestel and Kakhofski died almost immediately. The sufferings of the other three were painfully prolonged; the ropes broke, and they fell into the ditch beneath. Though severely injured, these unhappy gentlemen reascended the scaffold with a calm and composed air. "Nothing succeeds in this country," said Ryleif; "not even death." "Woe to the country," said Sergius Mouravieff, "where they can neither conspire, nor judge, nor hang!" This time the dismal ceremony was effectually performed; and in a few minutes the roll of drums announced that the victims had ceased to exist.

The conspirators who were sent to Siberia included many persons of high rank, and amongst them Prince Troubetzkoi. All who were married were accompanied by their wives: these high-minded women, who had moved in the first circles of society, voluntarily going with their husbands into exile, in spite of the offered protection of the emperor if they would remain at St. Petersburg. Towards these noble and self-denying women, Nicholas then exhibited a resentment as unmanly as it was ungenerous. Regarding the act of following their husbands into exile as an adoption of the principles of the latter, he behaved towards them with an inexorable severity; and even after the lapse of fifteen years, sternly refused a petition addressed to him by the Princess Troubetzkoi, imploring permission to remove to some place where the climate was milder, and where she might obtain the rudiments of education for her children.

On the morning after the execution of the conspirators, Nicholas caused the Place of the Senate, which had been the theatre of the insurrection, to be subjected to a



ceremony which was presumed to act as a purification. "On the spot," said he in a proclamation to the people and the army, "where, seven months ago, the explosion of a sudden revolt revealed the existence of a vast conspiracy which had been going on for ten years, it is meet that a last act of commemoration—an expiatory sacrifice—should consecrate on the same spot the memory of the Russian blood shed for religion, the throne, and the country. We have recognised the hand of the Almighty, when He tore aside the veil which concealed that horrible mystery: it permitted crime to arm itself in order to assure its fall. Like a momentary storm, the revolt only broke forth to annihilate the conspiracy of which it was the consummation." The ceremony was attended by the whole garrison of St. Petersburg, amounting to 60,000 men. An altar was erected in the great square, and a service of thanksgiving performed at it by the metropolitan archbishop. The priests then scattered holy water over the soldiers, the people, and the pavement; after which the bands of all the regiments struck up a hallelujah! and the ceremony concluded with the discharge of a hundred guns.

The strict investigation which had been made into all the details of the conspiracy, brought to light much of the shameless corruption which impeded the course of justice and impaired the service of the state. Nicholas resolved on an attempt to eradicate this wholesale dishonesty; but his success was but slight and partial, because he did not adopt the plan of paying the various officers of the state, either in civil or military departments, sums adequate to the responsibilities they had to discharge, and sufficient to raise them beyond those temptations which beset the needy. He appealed not to the interest, but to the honour and sense of duty of the servants of the state; and to this they were, for the most part, insensible. He caused circulars to be sent to all the judges and governors of the empire, urging them to a faithful discharge of their duties, and threatening the severest penalties in the event of their not doing so. To assist the judges in their labours, and to make the course of the law intelligible to the people, he also ordered the imperial ukases to be collected, printed, and codified; and also caused a uniform code, forming a complete system of law, to be constructed out of these enormous, and frequently heterogeneous, materials.

By a ukase of the 5th of March, Nicholas also abolished a cruel mode of torture which had been long in use among the Cossacks of the Don, and consisted in attaching the feet of a victim to great blocks of stone in a room, while his hands were fastened at extreme tension to the ceiling, and leaving him in that position until death released him from his sufferings. Yet, though putting down cruelty in others, he conducted his own government with great severity. The number of persons exiled to Siberia in 1826 amounted to 12,000, and exceeded, by 3,000, the number banished to that frozen region in the preceding year; a period which the gloomy suspicions of Alexander had caused to be more than usually full of arrests and expatriations for real or suspected political offences.

The coronation of the emperor followed; but, before we speak of this event, it is necessary to mention a few brief biographical facts concerning his career before he came to the throne. Nicholas, the third son of the emperor Paul, was born at St. Petersburg on the 7th of July, 1796. On the assassination of that eccentric tyrant, the young grand-duke was left entirely to the care of his mother. This lady appointed General Lamsdorf to be his governor, and selected the Countess Lieven, and the German philologist, Adelung, as his principal teachers in languages and literature, and counsellor Storch as his instructor in general politics, and in the other sciences and arts regarded as suitable to his rank and station. Nicholas acquired the power of speaking the French and German languages with as much facility as the Russian, and early manifested that attachment for military display and the art of fortification which distinguished him through life.

On the termination, in 1814, of the great European war, Nicholas was sent on his travels, and visited some of the principal battle-fields. In 1816 he came to England, and was received with much cordiality. He afterwards made a tour of the chief provinces of the Russian empire. On the 13th of July, 1817, he was united to Frederica Louisa Charlotte Wilhelmina, the eldest daughter of Frederic William III., the king of Prussia. The lady, born on the 13th of July, 1798, entered the Greek church on the occasion of her marriage, and, according to Russian custom, assumed the names of Alexandra Feodorowna.

The coronation of the emperor and em-



press took place at Moscow on the 3rd of September, 1826, and was conducted with extraordinary pomp; so much so, as to elicit from a lady of rank the thoughtless expression of "How vexatious it is that such *fêtes* are so rare!" Their imperial majesties were received at Moscow with an enthusiasm which was scarcely to have been expected after the recent insurrection, and its tragical and unpopular results. That ancient city exhibited a splendid spectacle; for those portions of it which had been destroyed by the conflagration of 1812, had been rebuilt in a more elegant and durable manner; noble stone structures having, in many instances, taken the place of wooden palaces and other buildings. One incident, on this occasion, produced a great and joyful sensation amongst the crowds which filled the city. On the evening before the coronation, the Grand-duke Constantine came spontaneously and unexpectedly from Warsaw, to assist in the ceremony, and do honour to his younger brother. When Nicholas and Constantine appeared hand-in-hand on the day of the coronation, the enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds; and the tremendous shouts of "Hurrah! Constantine!" which rent the air, at first startled the emperor, as they recalled a painful recollection of the events of the insurrection at St. Petersburg. It was but for a moment; Nicholas then saw that the shouts were a tribute of admiration to the generous self-denial of Constantine; and the brothers publicly embraced. Constantine, though seventeen years older than Nicholas, had not only surrendered his crown, but was the first to do homage to the new sovereign.

Nicholas was in some respects favoured by nature, and had many qualities which fitted him for the exalted position in which he was placed. His stature was remarkably lofty; his features handsome, though their customary expression was cold and severe; and his demeanour majestic. He united considerable mental powers with an inflexible will, and that subtlety of intellect which is characteristic of educated Russians.

\* That is to say, that the improvements and triumphs of Nicholas have been accomplished by a retrograde motion, in opposition to the enlightenment and progressive spirit of the most civilised nations of Europe! This going back into the past, or, at the best, standing still with barbarism, may have been a triumph to the emperor Nicholas; for it certainly appears to have been one of the chief aims of his rule; but how it could be an improve-

ment we are at a loss to perceive. As we have stated in a previous note (see *ante*, p. 348), there was more freedom in Russia, and more promise of a better state of society, under the sway of Catherine II., than there has ever been since. Had the empire been governed, since her time, by a succession of monarchs of her intellectual power, its moral and social development, and national progress towards that rational freedom, personal polish, and general

While speaking personally of the emperor we are at a loss to perceive. As we have stated in a previous note (see *ante*, p. 348), there was more freedom in Russia, and more promise of a better state of society, under the sway of Catherine II., than there has ever been since. Had the empire been governed, since her time, by a succession of monarchs of her intellectual power, its moral and social development, and national progress towards that rational freedom, personal polish, and general



peror Nicholas, it will be well to introduce the following portraiture of him by the French traveller, the Marquis de Custine, who had frequent opportunities of observing him. The description refers to a later period of the life of the emperor; but it is probable that it applies almost equally as well to the one of which we are now writing:—

“The predominant expression of his countenance is that of a restless severity, which strikes a beholder at the first glance, and, in spite of the regularity of his features, conveys by no means a pleasant impression. Physiognomists pretend, with much reason, that the hardness of the heart injures the beauty of the countenance. Nevertheless, this expression in the emperor Nicholas appears to be the result of experience rather than the work of nature. By what long and cruel sufferings must not a man have been tortured, when his countenance excites fear, notwithstanding the voluntary confidence that noble features inspire!

“A man charged with the management and direction, in its most minute details, of some immense machine, incessantly fears the derangement of one or other of its various parts. He who obeys, suffers only according to the precise measure of the evil inflicted; he who commands, suffers first as other men suffer, and afterwards, that common measure of evil is multiplied a hundred-fold for him by the workings of imagination and self-love. Responsibility is the punishment of absolute power. If he be the *primum mobile* of all minds, he becomes the centre also of all griefs; the more he is dreaded, the more is he to be pitied.\*

“He to whom is accorded unlimited rule, sees, even in the common occurrences of life, the spectre of revolt. Persuaded that his rights are sacred, he recognises no bounds to them but those of his own intelligence and will, and he is, therefore, subject to constant annoyance. An unlucky fly, buzzing in the imperial palace during a ceremony, mortifies the emperor; the independence of nature appears to him a bad example; everything which he cannot subject to his arbitrary laws, becomes, in his education by which serfs and mobs are converted into a people, would have been far more rapid. The eventual attainment of these things by Russia is only a work of time: government cannot always be carried on by repressive means; for progression is a law of nature, whether applied to a tree, a man, or an empire. Men cannot for ever be ruled by a

eyes, as a soldier who, in the heat of battle, revolts against his officer. The emperor of Russia is a military chief, and every day with him is a day of battle.

“Nevertheless, at times some gleams of softness temper the imperious looks of this monarch; and then, the expression of affability reveals all the native beauty of his classic features. In the heart of the husband and the father, humanity triumphs for a moment over the policy of the prince. When the sovereign rests from his task of imposing the yoke upon his subjects, he appears happy. This combat between the primitive dignity of the man and the affected gravity of the sovereign, appears to me worthy the attention of an observer; it occupied mine the greater part of the time I passed in the chapel.

“The emperor is above the usual height by half a head; his figure is noble, although a little stiff; he has practised from his youth the Russian custom of girding the body above the loins, to such a degree as to push up the stomach into the chest, which produces an unnatural swelling or extension about the ribs that is as injurious to health as it is ungraceful in appearance. This voluntary deformity destroys all freedom of movement, impairs the elegance of the shape, and imparts an air of constraint to the whole person. They say that when the emperor loosens his dress, the viscera, suddenly giving way, are disturbed for a moment in their equilibrium, which produces an extraordinary prostration of strength.

“The emperor has a Grecian profile, the forehead high, but receding; the nose straight and perfectly formed; the mouth very finely cut; the face, which in shape is rather a long oval, is noble; the whole air military, and rather German than Slavonic. His carriage and his attitudes are naturally imposing. He expects always to be gazed at, and never for a moment forgets that he is so. It may even be said, that he likes this homage of the eyes.

“He passes the greater part of his existence in the open air, at reviews, or in rapid journeys. During summer, the shade of his military hat draws across his forehead dread of banishment, the knout, the axe, or the bayonet.

\* Perhaps so: but the doctrine is a fanciful one. The marquis, in the work from which we quote (*De Custine's Russia*), utters many very questionable opinions, and some rather puerile ones. We prefer his narrative to his reflections.



an oblique line, which marks the action of the sun upon the skin. It produces a singular effect, but is not disagreeable, as the cause is at once perceived.

"In examining attentively the fine person of this individual, on whose will hangs the fate of so many others, I have remarked, with involuntary pity, that he cannot smile at the same time with the eyes and the mouth; a want of harmony which denotes perpetual constraint, and which makes one remember, with regret, that easy natural grace so conspicuous in the less regular but more agreeable countenance of his brother, the emperor Alexander. The

latter, always pleasing, had yet, at times, an assumed manner. The emperor Nicholas is more sincere; but he has an habitual expression of severity, which sometimes gives the idea of harshness and inflexibility. If, however, he is less fascinating, he is more firm than his late brother; but then, it must be added, that he has also a proportionately greater need of firmness. Graceful courtesy insures authority by removing the desire of resistance. The judicious economy in the exercise of power is a secret of which the emperor Nicholas is ignorant; he is one who desires to be obeyed where others desire to be loved."

## CHAPTER LVI.

WAR WITH PERSIA; DEFEAT AND SUBMISSION OF THAT STATE; THE GREEK INSURRECTION AND WAR OF INDEPENDENCE; RUSSIA AT FIRST DECLINES INTERFERENCE; SUBSEQUENT INTERVENTION OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, AND RUSSIA; DESTRUCTION OF THE TURKISH FLEET AT NAVARINO; EMANCIPATION OF GREECE FROM THE OTTOMAN YOKE; WAR WITH TURKEY; CAMPAIGNS OF 1828 AND 1829; INTERFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND AUSTRIA; PEACE OF ADRIANOPLE; REFLECTIONS UPON THAT EVENT.

THE emperor Nicholas, the very month of his coronation, declared war against Persia; an imperial manifesto to that effect appearing on the 28th of September, 1826. The region of the Caucasus was the cause of the quarrel. The Russian government, ever pursuing its policy of intervention in the affairs of weak or divided nations, had, in the year 1801, taken the Georgians into its protection, and annexed their country to the Russian empire.\* Even long before that time, the mountains of the Caucasus were the scene of almost incessant contests between the Russians, Turks, and Persians, who contended with each other for the possession of the soil. The various native tribes, or petty nations, also repelled their invaders with great bravery, and made it extremely dangerous for any of them to advance beyond the fortified posts they occupied. The recent wars with Persia and with Turkey had left Russia the predominant power in this locality. Yet her mode of government was not suited to the hardy and independent mountaineers, who soon broke out into hostility against its oppressiveness. This irritation was fomented

by the Turkish and Persian courts; and the war which Nicholas now declared against Persia was intended to decide the question, as to which was to become master of the Caucasus.

Persia soon felt her inability to contend against the overshadowing might of Russia. Her troops were utterly defeated by the Russians, under General Paskiewitch, on the 8th of August, at the battle of Elizabetopol. In the campaign of the following year the Persians were equally unfortunate. Several towns were taken; and the shah, threatened with destruction, had no resource but in submission. Peace was concluded between the two courts on the 28th of February, 1828. By this treaty, that of Turkmanchai, Russia (though she disclaimed all desire of conquest, and repelled as injurious every imputation of an ambitious desire to aggrandise her territory) declared, that her anxiety to prevent any future collision with Persia, compelled her to establish a frontier line, so well defined as to leave no room for doubt or discussion. The river Araxes was therefore adopted as this boundary—an arrangement by which the Russian dominions in Asia were con-

\* See ante, p. 384.



siderably increased. The Khanat of Talish, the province and fortress of Erivan, were thus ceded to Russia; together with the important harbour of Anapa, on the Black Sea. The sacrifices made by Persia were immense; for, in addition to the territorial concessions, she was compelled to pay the whole expenses of the war. She had, however, no alternative, not being in a condition to renew the struggle.

It is necessary to say a few words with respect to the Greek insurrection against the power of Sultan Mahmoud—a struggle which, at this period, occupied the attention of nearly the whole of Europe. Four centuries of national subjection beneath the barbarous government of the Turks, had not extinguished in the Greeks their ancient love of liberty, or bowed their spirit to their abject condition.

Debased as the national character was by ages of a grinding political servitude, although the Greeks mostly retained only the vices of their brave and beauty-loving ancestors, yet were there many of them who remembered that they were the descendants of a noble race—

“Whose land, from plain to mountain cave,  
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!”

and, in their enthusiastic bosoms, the spark of liberty, once implanted, was soon fanned into a quenchless flame.

The numerous troubles in which the Ottoman empire was involved, had encouraged in the Greeks a hope of throwing off its oppressive yoke. A powerful secret society was formed, with a well-organised agency, which extended throughout the whole of European Turkey. It was rumoured, in whispers, that some of the most distinguished persons in Europe were members of the society of the Hetairists. Count Capo d'Istria, a Greek by birth, but a Russian by adoption, who held the important situation of private secretary to the emperor Alexander, was known to be one—an incident which gave rise to the rumour, that even the czar himself was amongst the number. This circumstance, combined with the fact of identity in religion, and the well-known desires of the Russian government, caused all the Greeks to cast their eyes towards that country, with not only the hope, but the almost confident expectation of assistance.

In the war between the Porte and Ali Pasha (the powerful ruler of Janina), the

Greeks thought they saw the long-desired opportunity. A general rising was therefore proclaimed on the 6th of April, 1821, by the Archbishop of Patros, and universally responded to. The Greeks were at first successful; but Mahmoud, having obtained the assistance of Mehemet Ali, the pasha of Egypt, and his warlike son, Ibrahim, made such fierce efforts to crush the insurrection, that it seemed that submission must be eventually inevitable. The struggle was, however, continued with great heroism and endurance on the part of the Greeks, and with a revolting barbarity on that of the Turks. The Greeks confidently expected assistance from Russia; but, as we have shown in a preceding chapter, the emperor Alexander held aloof, from a morbid fear of all revolutionary proceedings. Notwithstanding the brilliant opportunity thus offered him of reconstituting a Greek empire which should ultimately reconquer Constantinople, his dread of revolutionary measures and doctrines induced him to proclaim a strict neutrality in the war between the Turks and the Greek subjects. The last check to the Ottoman fury was thus removed: a religious enthusiasm seized the Turks, who demanded to be led against the infidels, whom they declared they would exterminate to the last man. Such was the fury of the Turkish government and people, that the whole of the Greeks in Constantinople were only saved from massacre in consequence of the earnest remonstrance of the Russian, French, and English ambassadors. The Greek patriarch and many of the Christian dignitaries were, however, ruthlessly murdered, and the churches broken into, plundered, and profaned.

Such were the atrocities and massacres committed by the Turks, and so unyielding was the attitude of the Greeks, that the Russian government expostulated with the sultan, and demanded reparation for the insults offered to the Greek religion, and the adoption of a more humane system of warfare in the contest with its Christian subjects. The divan deigned no answer to an expostulation which was accompanied with a threat of hostile proceedings in the event of refusal; and the Russian ambassador left Constantinople, having narrowly escaped being sent to the Seven Towers. The sultan then sent a message to St. Petersburg, justifying his own conduct, and stating, that the Christian churches which



had been destroyed by the Turkish populace should be rebuilt.

In the year 1822, the Greeks proclaimed their independence of the sultan, and achieved several heroic successes, which only drove their enemies to fresh barbarities. The vindictive struggle was prolonged over several years. The awful massacre in the island of Chios, created a thrill of horror throughout Europe. The feeling of the Christian nations was at length fairly aroused; and England, France, and Russia resolved to put a stop to this sanguinary war of extermination. Mahmoud, however, bent upon crushing all rebellion within his dominions, and making himself obeyed both by his Mohammedan and Christian subjects, declined any interference. The three powers, therefore, entered into an alliance on the 7th of July, 1827, for the protection of the Greeks. Alexander had been succeeded by his brother Nicholas, who was more disposed to turn the Greek revolution to political account than his cautious predecessor had been.

In consequence of this celebrated treaty, which has been aptly called "the cornerstone of Greek independence," the united powers proposed to the sultan that Greece should be a vassal state of Turkey, and acknowledge his suzerainty by paying an annual tribute. The Greeks, on their part, promised to submit to these conditions; but Mahmoud rejected them with disdain, and declared his fixed determination to persevere to the last in his endeavours to reduce his rebellious subjects to submission. In a manifesto issued upon the occasion, he said—"The Sublime Porte being engaged in punishing, and, in conformity with its sacred law, such of its turbulent subjects as have revolted, can never admit the right of any other power to interfere with it. The Ottoman government must consider those who address such proposals to it as intending to give consequence to a troop of brigands. A Greek government is spoken of, which is to be recognised in case the Sublime Porte does not consent to some arrangement; and it has even been proposed to conclude a treaty with the rebels. Has not the Sublime Porte great reason to be struck with astonishment at hearing such language from friendly powers? for history offers no example of conduct in all respects so opposite to the principles and duties of government. The Sublime Porte, therefore, can never listen

to such propositions, which it will neither hear nor understand, so long as the country inhabited by Greeks forms part of the Ottoman dominions; and they are tributary subjects to the Porte, which will never renounce its rights. If, with the aid of the Almighty, the Sublime Porte resumes full possession of that country, it will then act, as well for the present as the future, in conformity with the ordinances which its holy law prescribes with respect to its subjects."

This haughty answer provoked the allied powers to have recourse to menace in another form than words. They sent a fleet consisting of four English men-of-war, together with the same number of French and Russian ships of the line. A final note was then addressed to the sultan, who again decidedly refused to admit of any foreign interference in the contest pending between him and his Greek subjects. He was then informed, that the allied sovereigns would take such steps as they considered necessary to put an end to the struggle, though without interrupting the amity existing between them and the Porte. The persevering atrocities of Ibrahim Pasha hurried on the collision which such a state of affairs threatened; and on the 20th of October, 1827, the Turko-Egyptian fleet was, after a furious battle, which lasted for four hours, almost annihilated at Navarino. No less than fifty-two vessels, including four line-of-battle ships, nineteen frigates, and twenty-nine corvettes, were destroyed, together with their crews, amounting to about 7,000 men. Of the allies, the severest loss was sustained by the British, upon whom the brunt of the action fell; it amounted to 75 killed, and 197 wounded. The loss of the French was 43 killed, and 117 wounded; while that of the Russians was very trivial; for though that power had the greatest interest in the quarrel, yet it contrived to let its allies fight the battle.

Sultan Mahmoud bore this calamity with more calmness than was expected. He replied to a communication from the allied ministers—"My positive, absolute, definitive, unchangeable, eternal answer is, that the Sublime Porte does not accept any proposition regarding the Greeks, and will persist in its own will regarding them, even to the day of the last judgment." The sultan also demanded compensation for the destruction of his fleet, and declared that, until he received it, he would hold no inter-



course with the ambassadors of the three powers; who accordingly found it necessary to withdraw from Constantinople, which they did on the 8th of December, 1827. The withdrawal of the Ottoman forces, and the emancipation of Greece from the Turkish yoke, was the immediate consequence of the battle of Navarino; the promotion of the designs of Russia upon the territory of the sultan the remote result. Some grave fears were at the time entertained, in this country, respecting the increase which it gave to the preponderance of Russia in the East.

It has been correctly observed, that peace between Russia and Turkey is never anything more than a truce. To the ceaseless aggression of the first power must be added a fierce national antipathy between the Russians and the Turks, arising from difference of race and religion. These motives produce incessant animosity of so malignant a kind, that its fever is only to be cooled by frequent bloodshed. Prior to the battle of Navarino, Nicholas had been preparing for a renewal of war with Turkey, and, in the September of 1827, had ordered a military levy of two males in every 500 throughout the empire. At the same time an imperial ukase subjected the Jews resident in Russia to the military conscription. It may be presumed that the angry feeling existing between the Porte and the court of St. Petersburg was greatly aggravated by the catastrophe of Navarino; the more so, as the Turks, perhaps incorrectly, attributed the insurrection in Greece in a great measure to the secret machinations of the czar. Violent recriminations accordingly took place, and it soon appeared that both nations had resolved on war. The sultan accused the Russians of secretly encouraging the insurgent Greeks; with having assisted in the destruction of his fleet at Navarino, and violated the treaty of Bucharest. Nicholas replied by a manifesto, accusing the Porte of having excited the Circassians to revolt, and invited them to adopt Mohammedanism; with the violation of all treaties made in favour of its Christian subjects; with having arbitrarily fettered the commerce of the Black Sea, violated the amnesty granted to the Servians, and supported the Persians in their recent war with Russia.

For some months each empire was occupied with extensive military preparations. Hostilities commenced in May, 1828, when

General Wittgenstein crossed the Pruth at the head of 150,000 men, and in a short time took possession of Jassy and Bucharest, the capitals of Moldavia and Wallachia. Turkey was fearfully weakened, in a military point of view, by the breaking-up and destruction of the Janissaries—an act which Mahmoud had considered as inevitable, on account of their insolent and mutinous behaviour. The energetic sultan believed that his new troops, organised after the European system, would at once behave as well as European armies, and make up their numerical loss by their superior efficiency in the field. In this, however, he was mistaken; in exterminating the Janissaries he had crushed the military strength of his empire: his military reforms were extremely unpopular; and the fanatical Mussulman held aloof from the service of the state rather than adopt the costume and military tactics of the hated Christians.

Still the sultan proclaimed a holy war in defence of the religion of the prophet, and thus succeeded in collecting a very formidable force, amounting to scarcely less than 100,000 men, on the banks of the Danube, and as many more in Asia Minor, where General Paskiewitch was in the command of a Russian army.

The Russians forced the passage of the Danube in the month of June; and, on the 20th of that month, took the fortress of Kustendji, by which means they acquired a fortified harbour on the Black Sea, from which they could obtain supplies for their troops. They, however, suffered great loss while prosecuting the siege of Brahamov. On the first assault the Russians were repulsed with great slaughter, no less than 3,000 of them being killed or wounded around the breach. The following day, the 18th of June, the Turkish governor capitulated, and the Turks were allowed to retire from the town with the honours of war. The captors found 270 guns on the ramparts, and 17,000 pounds of powder in the magazines, together with immense stores of wood and provisions. The Russians also obtained further successes; and several fortresses, in the neighbourhood of the Danube, surrendered to them with a rapidity which engendered a suspicion of treachery on the part of those entrusted with the defence of them.

The sultan was, nevertheless, indefatigable in his efforts to defend his empire, and occupied himself constantly in organising troops,



and sending reinforcements to the theatre of war. A reserve was formed at Adrianople to relieve any point that might be threatened in the line of defence, and orders were issued to harass the enemy in every way, and at the same time to avoid general actions. Yet success favoured the Russians, who, in consequence of the result of the battle of Navarino, had acquired the superiority at sea. To this they owed the capture, on the 11th of June, of Anapa—a fortress on the Asiatic shore of the Black Sea, and regarded as valuable as being a safe and convenient harbour on that dangerous coast. On the 8th of July the first engagement of the campaign in the open field took place at Bazardjik, where the Russians experienced a defeat, and sustained a loss of 1,200 men. This check induced the emperor Nicholas, who had accompanied his troops, to wait for reinforcements before he resumed the struggle.

The Russians resumed their march on the 15th of July, and their advanced guard was again engaged and worsted by the Turkish cavalry. In another cavalry action, which took place before Shumla, the Turks, after effecting several brilliant charges, were compelled to retire before the Russian artillery. Nicholas intended to attack Shumla, which is a place of great strength, and regarded as the key to the Balkan; but a nearer acquaintance with the difficulties inseparable from such an attempt, induced him to abandon the design. Leaving, therefore, a corps of 30,000 men to watch Shumla, he directed his efforts to the reduction of Varna, in which proceeding he could be assisted by his fleet. It was necessary to accomplish some success to sustain the *prestige* of the Russian arms; for the result of the campaign had not been very favourable to them. Its issue was doubtful; pestilential fevers had made their appearance amongst the troops; the hospitals were crowded with sick, and cases of the plague had occurred. The invading army had lost about half its number; for sickness had, as is always the case in campaigns conducted in an enemy's country, proved far more fatal than the sword. The siege of Varna proceeded slowly, for the Turkish garrison made constant sallies, and fought with an intrepidity that cost the Russians a vast number of men. A Turkish detachment from the reserve at Adrianople, also attempted to relieve the town; and though they did not succeed in doing so, they yet

inflicted some severe reverses on the Russians. The siege was still pressed forward; and although the defence was heroically maintained, the governor became at length sensible that eventual surrender was inevitable. It capitulated on the 11th of October, the garrison, amounting to 6,800 men, becoming prisoners of war. No less than 162 pieces of cannon were taken by the victors, besides great stores of ammunition and provisions. The capitulation was conducted by Jussuf Pasha, the second in command, without the consent of his superior. The rumours of treachery which this man's conduct occasioned, were soon confirmed by the fact of his sailing away in a Russian frigate to Odessa, where he shortly afterwards received a grant of lands in the Crimea from the emperor Nicholas, on the pretence of compensating him for the loss of his Turkish estates, which had been confiscated at the command of the sultan.

Varna had fallen; but the important fortress of Silistria, which had been for some time blockaded by the Russians, successfully defied its enemies. An attempt to invest it, in the hope of compelling it to surrender before the coming on of winter, was frustrated by the autumnal storms. The Russians then found it necessary to raise the blockade, and to retreat behind the Danube. This chequered campaign, in fact, terminated with the capitulation of Varna, and the emperor Nicholas embarked, on the 14th of October, on board a vessel named the *Empress-mother*, for Odessa. During the voyage the ship was overtaken by a tempest; and the peril was so great, that all on board gave themselves up for lost. Nicholas alone, it is said, preserved a dignified demeanour; and on the captain proposing to run the vessel ashore, declared, that he would sooner die than fall into the hands of the sultan. A change in the wind saved him from either fate; and the vessel at length reached Odessa, after the crew had sustained great toil and sufferings. The retreat of the main Russian army towards the Danube was, in consequence of the severity of the weather, the bad roads, and the harassing attacks of the fierce Turkish cavalry, attended with so many disasters, and so great a loss of life, that eye-witnesses of both instituted comparisons between it and the terrible retreat of the French from Moscow in 1812. After suffering fearful hardships, the miserable Russian columns reached the



Danube, which they crossed, and took up their winter quarters in Wallachia.

In Asia the Russians, under the able General Paskiewitch, were more successful, though their force did not exceed 26,000 men. Paskiewitch laid siege to the strongly-fortified town of Kars, and captured it, despite its reputation for impregnability. The garrison, numbering 7,000 men, were made prisoners; while 129 pieces of cannon, 22 mortars, 33 standards, and immense stores of ammunition, became the spoil of the victors. Akhalzikh, a strong fortress between Kars and the Black Sea, next succumbed to the Russians; and during the progress of the siege, a severe conflict, or rather battle, took place, in which the Turks suffered a decided defeat. The forts Alskhur and Ardagan were also reduced, and preparations made for an advance on Erzeroum, the capital of Asia Minor, in the next campaign; the present one terminating with some comparatively unimportant though successful operations.

Before the resumption of hostilities in the following year, the Russian ambassador to Persia was assassinated at Teheran—a circumstance which created great excitement, and seemed to promise a renewal of war with that country. Reports were circulated, that an offensive and defensive alliance had been made between Turkey and Persia. The Asiatic provinces, which, from prudential motives, had courted the alliance of the Russian general, now exhibited signs of hostility; and the Turks were encouraged to make an attempt to recover the town and fortress of Akhalzikh. In the spring of 1829 the Russians were besieged there by the Turks. The garrison suffered severely from the fire of their assailants, and was reduced to a state of extreme peril. They, however, rejected every summons to surrender, and were saved by the arrival of a relieving force, which succeeded in compelling the Turks to raise the siege. This event induced the Persian government to change its policy. Abandoning its threatening attitude, and disbanding its armaments, it sought and obtained the restoration of amicable relations with Russia.

We must now turn from the hostilities between the Turks and Russians in Asia, to those which took place between them in Europe, during the memorable campaign of 1829. Each side had made great efforts, during the winter, to recruit its forces; but

a spirit of disaffection prevailed amongst the Turks, who soon suffered severely for this want of loyalty towards their sultan, and of union among themselves. Not more than 100,000 Ottomans could be collected to defend the line of the Balkan, and of these about half were required to garrison the various fortresses on the Danube. On the other hand, the Russians commenced the campaign with an army which reinforcements had restored to its original strength of 150,000 men, who had with them 540 guns, and enormous stores of every requisite. The command was now given to General Diebitch, who had long acquired a great reputation for military talent. The Russians had a far greater superiority at sea; and while with one fleet they blockaded the Bosphorus, with another they shut in the Dardanelles. Constantinople itself was thus threatened with famine, from the loss of great part of its supplies; and as the Turks had no maritime power of sufficient strength to meet their foes, the latter had the entire command of the sea during the whole of the war.

The plan of the Russians was, to besiege Silistria, Roudschuck, and Shumla; and, after taking those places, to cross the range of the Balkans, and direct their march towards Constantinople. After some fierce but undecisive actions had taken place between detachments of the contending armies, Silistria was again invested with a force of 35,000 men; while its garrison consisted of less than 10,000. To relate the particulars of the siege, is neither possible nor necessary in a work of this limit. During its continuance, the battle of Koulefscha was fought, on the 11th of June. Victory, which at first favoured the Turks, finally remained with the Russians, who slew 5,000 of the Moslems, and captured 1,500, though at a great cost of life to themselves. By the 30th of the same month, the ramparts of Silistria were breached; and, as further resistance was regarded as hopeless, the pashas who commanded surrendered the town to the enemy, and the garrison as prisoners of war.

Possessed of Silistria, Diebitch made instant preparations for passing the Balkan; at the same time diverting the attention of the Turks by apparent preparations for an attack on Shumla. The Aidos Pass, through the chain of the Balkans, is regarded as the easiest, as a chasm at that









*View of the Fells - Lonsdale  
from Brough*





*Sheep on the Pelican Mountains*  
By J. B. Smith







spot renders the ascent but slight : yet the Porte had been so negligent as to leave this pass comparatively undefended. The Turks were compelled to retire after some slight encounters ; and the famous mountain barrier, which defends Constantinople from its European foes, was passed in triumph. The grand vizier, on learning what was going forward, detached 10,000 men from Shumla, to oppose the passage of the Russians ; but they arrived too late, and returned with the exaggerated intelligence, that the Russian force which had entered Roumelia was more numerous than the leaves of the forest and the sand of the sea. In point of fact, Diebitch and the Russians who had penetrated so far into Turkey, were in great danger ; and had the Turks shown the energy which they occasionally displayed, they might have cut their adventurous foes to pieces. Diebitch, however, concealed his weakness by adhering to offensive measures ; and, on the 11th of August, he attacked a body of Turks at Sliwno, and put them to flight. The Ottoman army retired before the invaders, who succeeded in reaching Adrianople, the ancient capital of the empire, which at once surrendered to them.

Great was the consternation, not only at Constantinople, but at the capitals of all the great powers of Europe, where statesmen were both astonished and alarmed at the progress of the Russian arms. England and Austria especially interfered to bring about an accommodation between the belligerents, and to prevent that destruction of the balance of power which must have resulted from the conquest of Turkey. They even entered into a secret convention to prevent such a catastrophe by the power of the sword ; and the English admiral in the Mediterranean was ordered, in the event of the Russians proving obdurate, to attack their fleet in the Greek waters, and carry it as a security to Malta. The efforts of European diplomatists, combined with exaggerated accounts of the force of Diebitch at Adrianople, together with the Turkish reverses in Asia, induced Sultan Mahmoud to consent to the treaty of peace, which was signed on the 14th of September, 1829. This peace—one of the most disastrous recorded in Turkish history—is known as the “Treaty of Adrianople.”

The emperor Nicholas, in deference to the opinion of Europe, publicly disclaimed all intention to aggrandise his dominions ;

and he restored to the sultan the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, together with all his conquests in Bulgaria and Roumelia, with the exception of the islands at the mouth of the Danube. Many of the conquests in Asia Minor were likewise restored to Turkey ; but Russia retained the fortresses of Anapa, Poli, Akhazikh, Alzkow, and Akhalkalski. The territorial losses of Turkey were thus far smaller than might have been anticipated under the circumstances ; but Russia obtained many advantages at the expense of her recent foe. Amongst these, were liberty to trade in all parts of the Turkish empire ; a free passage of the Dardanelles for all Russian merchant vessels ; and the undisturbed navigation of the Black Sea. Turkey was also to pay the sum of upwards of £5,000,000 for the expenses of the war ; nor were the Turkish territories to be abandoned by the Russian troops until the debt was fully discharged. Arrangements were also made with respect to Wallachia and Moldavia, which abrogated the sovereignty of the Porte with respect to these principalities, and gave to Russia a protectorate power over them. The hospodars were in future to be elected for life, and not, as hitherto, for seven years only ; and no Turkish pasha or officer was to be allowed to interfere, in any respect, in their affairs. “The better to secure”—so ran the terms of the treaty—“the future inviolability of Moldavia and Wallachia, the Sublime Porte engaged not to maintain any fortified post, or any Mussulman establishment, on the north bank of the Danube ; that the towns situated on the left bank, including Giurgevo, should be restored to Wallachia, and their fortifications never restored ; and all Mussulmans holding possessions on the left bank, were to be bound to sell them to the natives in the space of eighteen months. The government of the hospodars was to be entirely independent of Turkey ; and they were to be liberated from the quota of provisions they had hitherto been bound to furnish to Constantinople and the fortresses on the Danube. They were to be occupied by the Russian troops till the indemnity was fully paid up, for which ten years were allowed ; and to be relieved of all tribute to the Porte during their occupation, and for two years after it had ceased.”

This treaty, which stabbed the pride of Turkey, saved Diebitch and the Russian forces at Adrianople from destruction.



Emaciated by sickness, dwindled in numbers, they might have been destroyed to a man, and doubtless would have been so, had the Turks but known their condition. By the treaty of Adrianople, Greece was definitively separated from Turkey, and the Porte induced to acknowledge its independence. Russia, with that subtle policy which ever characterises its proceedings, also obtained by this treaty a right of interference on behalf of the Christian subjects of Turkey, which was utterly inconsistent with the dignity of a proud and independent state.

Lord Aberdeen, then secretary of foreign affairs in the British ministry, expostulated on its behalf with the Russian government respecting the treaty of Adrianople, which was viewed in this country and elsewhere with feelings of dissatisfaction and suspicion. "His imperial majesty," said Lord Aberdeen in a communication to Lord Heytesbury, British ambassador at Russia, "in carrying into execution his threatened invasion of the Ottoman dominions, declared his adherence to that disinterested principle which had characterised the protocol of St. Petersburg and the treaty of London. He renounced all projects of conquest and ambition. His imperial majesty frequently repeated that, so far from desiring the destruction of the Turkish empire, he was most anxious for its preservation. He promised that no amount of indemnity should be exacted which could affect its political existence; and he declared that this policy was not the result of romantic notions of generosity, or of the vain desire of glory, but that it originated in the true interests of the Russian empire, in which interests, well understood, and in his own solemn promises, would be found the best pledges of his moderation.

"His imperial majesty added, that his thoughts would undergo no change, even if, contrary to his intentions and his endeavours, Divine Providence had decreed that we should now behold the termination of the Ottoman power. His imperial majesty was still determined not to extend the limits of his own dominions; and he only demanded from his allies the same absence of all selfish and ambitious views, of which he would himself give the first example. Does

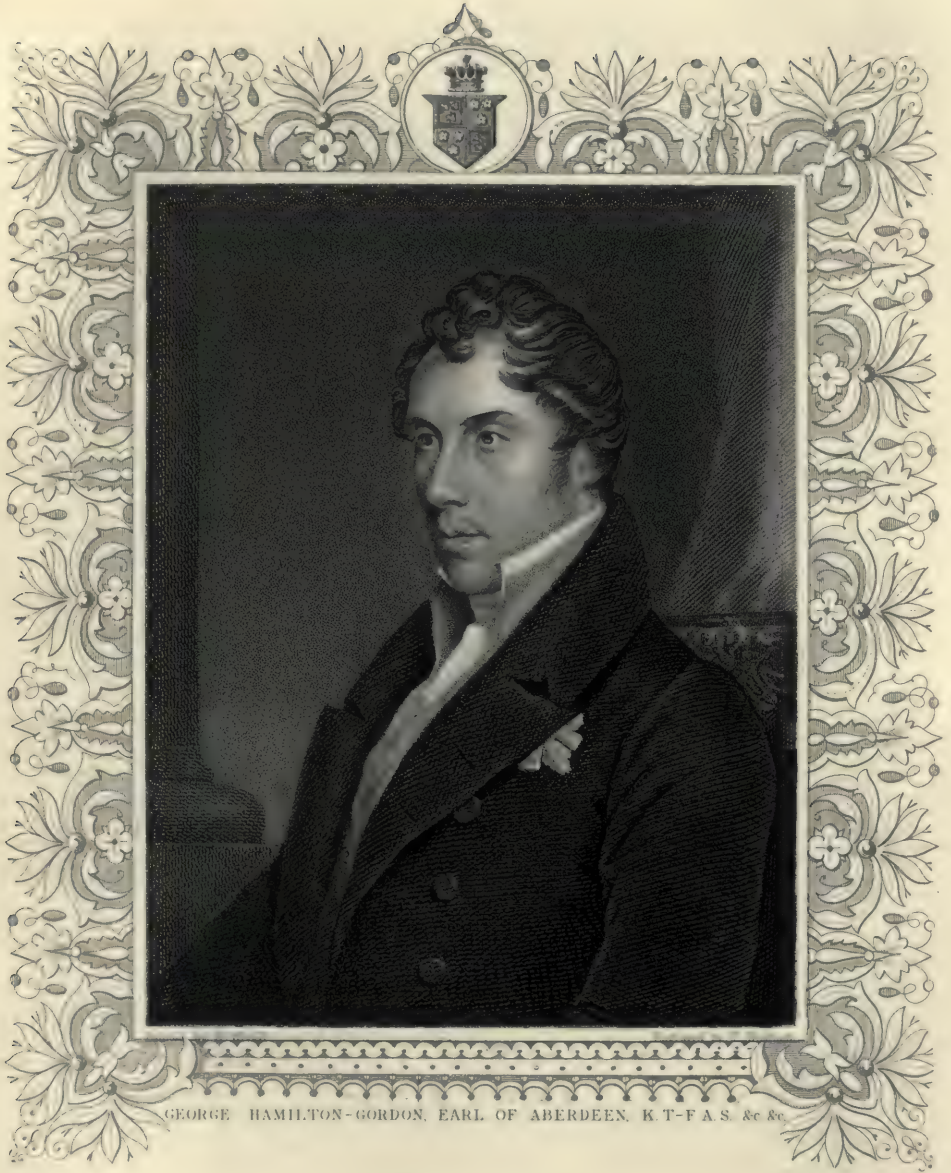
the treaty of Adrianople place the Porte in a situation corresponding with the expectations raised by these assurances? The answer must be left to the judgment of Europe: it might be left to the dispassionate judgment of the cabinet of St. Petersburg. Undoubtedly, if we look only at the relative position of the two belligerents, the fortune of the war might have enabled the emperor to exact still harder terms. The sultan, threatened by a formidable insurrection in Constantinople, having lost his army, and having ordered the remaining Asiatic troops to retire to their homes, was unable to offer any effectual opposition, and threw himself under the mercy of the Russian commander. It may not be easy to accuse of want of generosity the conqueror who checks the unresisted progress of success,\* and who spares the defenceless capital of his enemy. Nevertheless, the treaty in question, certainly not in conformity with the expectations held out by preceding declarations and assurances, appears vitally to affect the interests, the strength, the dignity, the present safety, and future independence of the Ottoman empire."

Reflecting on the chequered events which led to the disastrous treaty of Adrianople, the historian Alison, taking a more favourable and, we believe, more accurate view of the past than had been done by Lord Aberdeen, as well as a better hope for the future than had been expressed by that statesman, observes—"The campaigns of 1828 and 1829, though they terminated to the disadvantage of Turkey, are yet eminently calculated to modify the ideas generally entertained as to the great power of Russia in aggressive warfare, as well as to evince the means of defence, in a military point of view, which the Ottoman dominions possess. The Turks began the war under the greatest possible disadvantages. Their land forces had been exhausted by seven bloody campaigns with the Greeks; their marine ruined in the battle of Navarino; their enemies had the command of the Euxine and the Ægean, the interior lines of communication in their empire; the Janissaries, the military strength of the state, had been in part destroyed, in part alienated; and only 20,000 of the regular troops, intended to replace them, were as yet

\* This is the language of diplomacy, not of historic truth. The reader of the preceding pages will have seen, that the progress of the Russian arms was not only resisted, but frequently arrested

with a sanguinary severity which, had the Turks conducted the war with more judgment, and a more uniform and sustained energy, might, and indeed must, have led to very different results.





*Aberdeen*

*English Foreign Secretary when the Treaty of Adrianople was signed.*

THE LONDON PRINTING AND ENGRAVING COMPANY, LIMITED

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA









*Constantinople*







clustered round the standards of the prophet. On the other hand, the Russians had been making their preparations for six years; they had enjoyed fourteen years of European peace; and 120,000 armed men awaited on the Pruth the signal to march to Constantinople. Yet with all these disadvantages, the scales hung all but even between the contending parties. Varna was only taken in the first campaign in consequence of the Russians having the command of the sea; the Balkan passed in the second, from the grand vizier having been out-generaled by the superior skill of Diebitch. Even as it was, it was owing to treachery and disaffection that the daring march to Adrianople did not terminate in a disaster second only to the Moscow retreat. \* \* \* It is not to be supposed, however, that these startling results are to be ascribed to any weakness, in a military point, on the part of Russia, or any extraordinary warlike resources which the Turks possess, independent of their geographical position. The strength which Russia put forth in the war was immense. A hundred and sixty thousand men crossed the Danube in the course of the first campaign; 140,000 were brought up to reinforce them in the course of the second. Yet, with all this, they could only produce 31,000 men at

the battle of Koulefftscha; and when their victorious march was stopped, only 15,000 were assembled at Adrianople. At least 150,000 men had perished in the two campaigns; and that, accordingly, is the estimate formed by the ablest military historian of the war. A very small part of this immense force perished by the sword; fatigue, sickness, desertion, produced the greatest part of the dreadful chasm. The long march of 1,200 miles from Moscow to Poland, the pestilential plains of Wallachia, the hardships of two campaigns in the inhospitable hills or valleys of Bulgaria, did the rest. As Turkey is the portion of Europe most exposed to the incursions of the Asiatics, so is it the one to which Providence has given the most ample means of defence; for the plains of Wallachia and Moldavia present a perilous glacis, which must be passed before the body of the fortress is reached; the Danube is a vast and wet ditch, which covers the interior defences; the Balkan, a rampart impassable when defended by gallant and faithful soldiers. Sterility and desolation, the work of human tyranny, add to the defences of nature. Of no country may it be so truly said, in the words of Henry IV., 'If you make war with a small army you are beaten, if with a large one, starved.'

#### CHAPTER LVII.

NICHOLAS IS CROWNED KING OF POLAND; THE VICEROY CONSTANTINE; HIS DESPOTIC AND IRRITABLE TEMPER; THE OPPRESSIVE CONDUCT OF THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT PREPARES POLAND FOR REVOLT; INSURRECTION AT WARSAW, AND FLIGHT OF CONSTANTINE; APPOINTMENT OF A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT; GENERAL CHLOPICKI; DEPUTATION FROM THE POLES TO THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS; HE REFUSES CONCESSION; CONDUCT OF AUSTRIA AND PRUSSIA; POLISH MANIFESTO TO THE NATIONS OF EUROPE; THE POLES PASS A RESOLUTION OF DETHRONEMENT AGAINST NICHOLAS; THE APPEAL TO THE SWORD; BATTLES OF GROCHOW AND PRAGA; SURPRISE AND DEFEAT OF THE RUSSIANS NEAR WARSAW, AND AGAIN AT IGANIE; THE CHOLERA APPEARS IN THE POLISH ARMY; TERRIBLE BATTLE OF OSTROLENKA; DEATHS OF GENERAL DIEBITCH AND OF THE GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE; PASKIEWITCH APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY IN POLAND; REVERSES AND DESPERATE CONDITION OF THE POLES; SURRENDER OF WARSAW, AND SUBMISSION OF THE POLES; IMPLACABLE SEVERITY OF NICHOLAS; POLAND IS DECLARED AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE; REFLECTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.

THE emperor Nicholas also succeeded his brother Alexander as king of Poland, and was crowned as such at Warsaw on the 24th of May, 1829. Animated by the policy which influenced his predecessor—namely, that of attempting to hide the spirit of despotism beneath the garb of religion—he, on that

occasion, pronounced a prayer containing these words:—"O, my Lord and my God, may my heart be always in Thy hand; and may I reign for the happiness of my people, and to the glory of Thy holy name, according to the charter granted by my august predecessor, and already sworn to by me; in



order that I may not dread to appear before Thee on the day of the last judgment." We shall speedily see how Nicholas endeavoured to conform to this false prayer, in which he promised to govern according to the constitutional charter granted to Poland.

Since the settlement of Europe, in 1815, Poland, though it had lost its independence, had experienced a period of repose, and enjoyed an approach to prosperity. The emperor Alexander had endeavoured to conciliate the Poles; and it would have been well if the Grand-duke Constantine—who, during his reign, and also since the accession of Nicholas to the imperial throne of Russia, had held the dignity of viceroy of Poland—had followed his example. Constantine, however, was irritable, capricious, passionate, and despotic. Both in features and in mind he bore a considerable resemblance to his father Paul; and even his sanity has been questioned. After his marriage with the beautiful Polish countess, Joanna Grudzynski (afterwards known as the Princess Lowicz), his savage nature appeared to be somewhat softened; but his good temper could not be counted on for a moment. Often, while reviewing his troops, he would fly into a fit of furious passion at any trifling matter which was not exactly to his mind; and, for the venial offence of an individual, inflict some annoying punishment on a body of 40,000 men. Thoroughly penetrated with the precepts of the despotic school in which he had been reared, he had no feelings of mercy towards those who forgot what he regarded as the duty of unconditional obedience to the sovereign. He was sometimes deliberately cruel himself; and he suffered deliberate cruelty in others, to those who had thus put themselves, as he considered, beyond the bounds of pardon. The proud and spirited Poles, who, in their own opinion, owed no allegiance at all to the Russian emperor, endured all this with far more patience than might have been expected from them; but, at the same time, the whole of Poland was ready for some violent outbreak at the first opportunity that appeared to promise even a remote chance of a favourable result. This feeling was the more powerful in consequence of the romantic and passionate love which the upper and educated classes in Poland entertained for the principles of democracy, and their thirst for national independence. Secret societies, for the

promotion of the latter object, had existed for several years in Poland; and so extensive was their organisation, that they embraced in their numbers the most enlightened and patriotic men of the country.

"If," it has been observed by a writer on Polish history, "men have no opportunity of expressing their opinions publicly, they will do so privately. When the journals—the legitimate outlets of popular feeling—were thus arbitrarily and impolitically closed, secret societies began to multiply. A sort of political freemasonry connected the leaders of the meditated movement; and its ramifications extended as far as Wilna. Their avowed object was not merely to free their country and the grand-duchy from the Russian yoke, but to invoke their brethren of Galicia and Posen in one common cause, and thus openly to strike a blow for their dearest rights. But, however secret their meetings and purposes, neither could long escape the vigilance of the police, which, since the arrival of Constantine as commander-in-chief of the Polish army, had acquired alarming activity. Why this personage should have interfered in a branch of administration beyond his province—why he should have stepped out of his own peculiar sphere to hire spies, to collect information, and to influence the proceedings of the tribunals against the suspected or the accused—has been matter of much conjecture. Perhaps he proposed to render himself necessary to his imperial brother; perhaps he could not live without some bustle to excite him; perhaps his mind was congenially occupied in the discovery and punishment of treason. However this be, he acted with amazing impolicy. His wisest course—and the Poles themselves once hoped that he would adopt it—was to cultivate the attachment of the people among whom he resided, and thereby prepare their minds for one day seconding his views on the crown.\* Instead of this, he conducted himself towards all whom he suspected of liberal opinions (and few there were who did not entertain them), with violence—often with brutality. At his instigation, the secret police pursued its fatal career; arbitrary arrests, hidden condemnations, the banishment of many, the imprisonment of more, signalled his bane-

\* Constantine does not appear to have entertained any such views; we have shown that he certainly had no ambition in the direction of the Russian sceptre.



ful activity. That amidst so many sentences, some should be passed on individuals wholly innocent, need not surprise us. Where spies are hired to mix with society for the purpose of detecting the disaffected, if they do not find treason, they will make it; private malignity and a desire of being thought useful, if not indispensable, to their employers, and of enjoying the rewards due to success in procuring information, would make them vigilant enough. As this is a profession which none but the basest and most unprincipled of men would follow, we cannot expect that they would always exercise it with much regard to justice. In such men, revenge or avarice would be all-powerful.

"The university of Wilna was visited with some severity by the agents of this dreaded institution. Twenty of its students were seized, and sentenced to different punishments; none, however, very rigorous. Those of Warsaw were not used more indulgently. A state prison was erected in the capital, and its dungeons were soon crowded with inmates; many, no doubt, not undeserving their fate, but not a few the victims of an execrable system. The proceedings, however, which are dark, must always be suspected: of the hundreds who were dragged from the bosom of their families, and consigned to various fortresses, all would be thought innocent, since none had been legally convicted.

"By Article 10 of the constitutional charter, the Russian troops, when required to pass through Poland, were to be at the entire charge of the treasury of the czar: for years, however, they were stationed at Warsaw—evidently to overawe the population—at the expense of the inhabitants. Then the violation of individual liberty; the difficulty of procuring passports; the misapplication of the revenue to objects other than those for which it was raised (to the reimbursement of the secret police, for instance); the nomination of men as senators without the necessary qualifications, and who had no other merit than that of being creatures of the government—were infractions of the charter, as wanton as they were intended to be humiliating.

"The army was as much dissatisfied as the nation. The ungovernable temper, and the consequent excesses of Constantine;

the vexatious manœuvres which he introduced; his rigorous mode of exercise, fitted for no other than frames of adamant; and, above all, his overbearing manner towards the best and highest officers in the service, raised him enemies on every side. His good qualities—and he had many—were wholly overlooked amidst his ebullitions of fury, and the unjustifiable, often cruel, acts he committed while under their influence. On ordinary occasions, when his temper was not ruffled, no man could make himself more agreeable; no man could exhibit more—not of courtesy, for he was too rough for it—but of warm-heartedness; and his generosity in pecuniary matters was almost boundless.

"But the worst yet remains to be told. Russian money and influence were unblushingly employed in the diet, and to procure the return to the diet of such members only as were known to care less for their country than for their own fortunes. Then, instead of a diet being held every two years (in accordance with Art. 87), none was convoked from 1820 to 1825, and only one after the accession of Nicholas. Finally, an ordinance (issued in 1825) abolished the publicity of the debates in the two chambers; and the most distinguished members of opposition were forcibly removed from Warsaw the night preceding the opening of the diet."\*

The revolution which, in 1830, drove the weak and despotic Charles X. from the throne of France, excited the enthusiasm of the Poles, and appeared, to their ardent hopes, to form the desired opportunity to strike the blow which they trusted would free them from the yoke of Russia. Nicholas, regarding himself as the champion of legitimacy, was furious at an event so subversive of its principles; and he even contemplated a war with France, which was suspected of inciting the Poles to resistance against him, when his attention was arrested by insurrectionary proceedings in Poland itself. Meetings were held at Warsaw, and the patriots, or conspirators, as they were called (according to the bias of the narrator), resolved upon proceeding at once to extremities. It was at first proposed to include the whole extent of ancient Poland in the insurrection; but this scheme was abandoned, because it would elicit the hostility not only of Russia, but also of Austria and Prussia. The outbreak, there-

\* Dunham's *History of Poland*.



fore, was to be confined to Poland Proper, with which Russia only was concerned.

A scheme for the assassination of Constantine, and the proclamation of a provincial government, was disconcerted in consequence of some suspicions of the police, and the consequent arrest of some of the conspirators. The viceroy was incredulous, and disregarded the warnings conveyed to him. He relied on his supposed popularity with the troops, and persisted in declaring that there was no danger.

The activity of the police, and the numerous arrests they made, precipitated the outbreak of the insurrection, which took place at Warsaw on the 29th of November, 1830, a day when the Polish guards were to be on service at the palace and in the city. At seven in the evening, a man made his appearance at the gate of the barrack of the military school, and proclaimed that the "hour of liberty had struck." The guard instantly turned out, and, together with the scholars, marched in silence to the Belvidère palace, the residence of the viceroy. They experienced but little difficulty in entering it; for many of the soldiers on duty there were aware of their object, and favourable to it; while those who opposed them were instantly sabred. The chief of the police, and the aide-de-camp on service, then fell victims to the wrath of the conspirators as they pressed forward to the chamber of Constantine, who with difficulty made his escape, together with his wife, by a private staircase.

A call "to arms" resounded through the city, and the insurgents were speedily joined by other regiments; while the arsenal was seized, and 40,000 muskets in store there, distributed among the people. All the Russian troops remained faithful to Constantine, and so did a portion of the Polish soldiers. Several nocturnal combats took place; but morning displayed the inequality of the struggle; and Constantine retired in despair with the troops who adhered to him, amounting to about 9,000 men, to the village of Wirzba, about a mile and a-half from Warsaw. The conspirators thus remained in possession of the capital, and, to check the rising disorder, appointed a provisional government, which numbered amongst its members Prince Adam Czartoryski, Prince Michael Radzivil, the senator Kochanowski, General Lewis Pac, M. Julian Niemcewicz, and General Chlopicki. The high character which these patriotic

men bore amongst the people, enabled them to preserve a degree of order, and to prevent revolution from degenerating into anarchy.

The provisional government appears to have been undecided as to how it should proceed. This might well be, as it included amongst its numbers the members of a council which, in the absence of the viceroy, had been intrusted with the executive power; and its opinions were therefore necessarily divided. Its first act was to issue a proclamation, counselling order and abstinence from bloodshed, and it then sent messengers to Constantine, with proposals for an accommodation. General Chlopicki, though a man of undoubted patriotism and personal courage, was in favour of this course, from a fear that the attempt to cast off the Russian yoke by force must certainly fail. At the outbreak of the insurrection, it is said that he took his compasses, and, measuring the extent of the Russian empire, shook his head, observing, "If Poland dares to resist, she is lost."

The deputation sent to arrange matters with the Grand-duke Constantine, desired to obtain a just observance of the constitution established on the settlement of Europe in 1815, and the fulfilment of a promise made by the emperor Alexander, that Lithuania, Volhynia, and Podolia should be incorporated with the kingdom of Poland, and detached from the Russian empire. Constantine, though unable to conclude terms with the insurgents (a matter which rested with the emperor), received the deputation with a courtesy which, it is presumed, was dictated by apprehensions as to his personal safety. In fact, he found the Polish troops who remained with him were rapidly catching the revolutionary enthusiasm; and he issued a proclamation, permitting those who desired it, to retire and join their comrades in Warsaw. This act was as prudent as it appeared generous; for it enabled the viceroy to ascertain who were really his friends, and saved him from the chance of being made a prisoner by his own troops. All the Poles availed themselves of this permission; and Constantine, with his Russians, was permitted to leave Poland unmolested and retire towards the frontier of Volhynia. This was an error on the part of the provisional government, who should have retained the grand-duke as a hostage.

At Warsaw, the people were in a state of



the wildest enthusiasm, which was increased by the arrival of additional Polish troops from other quarters. Soldiers and citizens embraced each other in the streets, elegantly dressed women waved their handkerchiefs from their open windows to the troops, and the church bells rang forth in joyous peals. Steps were taken for the formation of a powerful national army; the provisional government resigned, and General Chlopicki assumed the command of the army, and the title of dictator, which latter he promised readily to relinquish on the meeting of the diet. Chlopicki was not fitted by nature and education for the position into which circumstances had thrust him, though great reliance was placed upon his military talents, which were considered of a high order; yet he was deficient in that audacity and enthusiasm which alone can carry men successfully through great revolutions, and would probably have been better fitted to assist in crushing than creating one. "Accustomed to military rules and subordination," says a living writer, who has ably sketched his character, "Chlopicki had a perfect horror for conspiracies and the domination of clubs. Accordingly he kept himself clear of the great conspiracies of 1825 and 1826 (connected with the insurrection in Russia in those years), and lived in retirement down to 1830. He was inspired with a thorough contempt for levies *en masse*, and all those devices by which the ardent but inexperienced in all ages endeavour to supply the want of regular soldiers. He dreaded the clubs of Warsaw even more than the Muscovite bayonets. It was his great object to achieve the liberation of his country, and the establishment of its rights, by other means than democratic fervour, which he considered as alike short-lived and perilous. Thus he was the man of all others least calculated to retain the suffrages of the clubs of Warsaw, which early acquired so great a weight in the revolution; and one of his first steps, after he became dictator, was to close them by a general military order. But he possessed an immense military reputation, and was known to have military talents of the very highest order, which rendered his sway over the soldiers unbounded; and as his patriotism was undoubted, and his character elevated and disinterested, his rule was for some time unresisted even by the burning democrats of the capital. He despised and de-

tested them as much as Napoleon did the '*avocats et idéologues*' of Paris; and it was his great object, without their aid, and while retaining the direction of their movements, to work out the independence of Poland by negotiation with the czar, and without coming to open rupture with his authority. But to achieve this object, he was well aware that military preparations were indispensable; and his measures to attain this end, though not of the sweeping kind which the clubs demanded, were energetic and successful."

From this sketch it will be seen, that General Chlopicki was strangely misplaced as the leader of a revolution; for notwithstanding his patriotism, it is clear that his nature was aristocratic and conservative, and that his lot should have been cast in other places. Indeed, to his repression of the republican spirit at the outset of the insurrection, are attributed many of the misfortunes which subsequently befel his compeers. Clinging to the hope of an accommodation, he sent a body of 800 Russian soldiers, who had been seized near Warsaw by the Poles, back to Constantine without exchange, and the grand-duke reciprocated these civilities. But it was to the emperor Nicholas that Chlopicki was compelled to address himself, if he would terminate the revolution by the pen instead of the sword; and Nicholas possessed far more decision than Constantine, who, indeed, had just shown himself very deficient in that quality so essential to a ruler over a turbulent or discontented people.

Chlopicki, accordingly, sent a deputation to the emperor Nicholas at St. Petersburg, to explain the concessions required by the Poles. The envoys (Prince Lubecki and Count Jezierski) were received by him with great sternness. After reproaches for their treasonable conduct, and what he was pleased to term their ungrateful forgetfulness of all his benefits, he warned them that the first cannon-shot fired by the insurgents would be the signal of the ruin of Poland. He, however, offered an unconditional amnesty to all except the leaders of the revolt; but he would make no further concession. This, in effect, amounted to a refusal of all accommodation; and on the return of the envoys to Warsaw, all parties prepared for an appeal to the power of the sword. Nicholas inquired of the courts of Austria and Prussia what part they designed to take in the event of the



Polish revolution leading to a war; and received answers from each expressive of sympathy with him as a sovereign, and promising to give no assistance to the insurgents; to permit no correspondence to pass from Poland through their dominions; and to keep the harbours of Dantzic and Königsberg closed against all convoys of ammunition or provisions, even though they should come from England or France. In addition to this, Prussia dishonestly consented to sequester the funds belonging to the kingdom of Poland in the bank of Berlin, and to place them at the disposal of the emperor Nicholas. At the same time, however, that the court of Vienna was making assurances of assistance to Russia, it—animated by a jealousy of that power—made a secret communication to the Poles, that it would not offer any impediment to the restoration of their nationality, providing they would accept as king a prince of the house of Austria, and that the consent of England and France could be obtained to this sinister transaction. A Polish envoy was even sent to Paris and to London upon the subject; but France would do nothing without England; and the English cabinet, with Lord Palmerston as minister for foreign affairs, declined to interfere on behalf of Poland. France afterwards sent M. de Mortemart to St. Petersburg, to see if favourable terms could not be obtained for the Poles; but that envoy found Nicholas altogether inexorable.

As might have been anticipated, the Russian emperor was making immense efforts to crush the insurrection. On the 24th of December, 1830, he issued a proclamation to the Russian people, in which he endeavoured to excite them against the Poles, whom he described as their ancient enemies, who had returned kindness with treachery and treason. At the same time, he collected an army of 110,000 men, under the command of General Diebitch, and stationed them along the road from St. Petersburg to Warsaw. In reply to Nicholas, the Polish diet (which had now assembled) addressed, on the 10th of January, 1831, a manifesto to the nations of Europe. In it the enthusiastic Poles thus poured forth their wrongs and their hopes, in the hearing of the continent:—"The world knows too well the infamous machinations, the vile calumnies, the open violence, and secret treasons, which have accompanied

the three dismemberments of ancient Poland. History, of which they have become the property, has stigmatised them as political crimes of the deepest dye. The solemn grief which that violence has spread through the whole country, has caused the feelings of nationality to be preserved without interruption. The Polish standard has never ceased to wave at the head of the Polish legions; and in their military emigration, the Poles, transporting from country to country their household gods, have never ceased to cry aloud against this violation; and yielding to the noble illusion, which, like every noble thought, has not been deceived, they trusted that, in combating for the cause of liberty, they were combating also for their own country.

"That country has risen from its ashes; and though restrained within narrow limits, Poland has received from the hero of the last age, its language, its rights, its liberties—gifts in themselves precious, but rendered doubly so by the hope with which they were accompanied. From that moment his cause has become ours, our blood become his inheritance; and when our allies, and Heaven itself, seemed to have abandoned him, the Poles shared the disasters of the hero; and the fall together of a great man and an unfortunate nation, extorted the involuntary esteem of the conquerors themselves. That sentiment produced a deep impression; the sovereigns of Europe, in a moment of danger, promised to the world a durable peace; and the congress of Vienna in some sort softened the evils of our unhappy country. A nationality, and entire freedom of internal commerce, were guaranteed to all parts of ancient Poland; and that portion of it which the strife of Europe had left independent, though mutilated on three sides; received the name of a kingdom, and was put under the guardianship of the emperor Alexander, with a constitutional charter, and the hope of future extension. In performance of these stipulations he gave a liberal constitution to the kingdom, and held out to the Poles under his immediate government the hope of being, ere long, reunited to their severed brethren. These were not gratuitous promises; he had contracted anterior obligations to us; and we, on our side, had made corresponding sacrifices. In proclaiming himself *king of Poland*, the emperor of Russia was only faithful to his promises.



"But the hopes implied by these circumstances proved as short-lived as they were fallacious. The Poles were ere long convinced, by dearly-bought experience, that the vain title of Poland, given to the kingdom by the emperor of Russia, was nothing but a lure thrown out to their brothers, and an offensive arm against the other states. They saw that, under cover of the sacred names of liberty and independence, he was resolved to reduce the nation to the lowest point of degradation and servitude. The measure pursued in regard to the army first revealed this infamous design. Punishments the most excruciating, pains the most degrading, were, under pretence of keeping up military discipline, inflicted—not for faults of commission, but mere omission. The arbitrary disposition of the commander-in-chief, his absolute control over the courts-martial, soon rendered him the absolute master of the life and honour of every soldier. Numbers in every grade have sent in their resignations, and committed suicide in despair at the degrading punishments to which they had been subjected. The deliberative assembly, from which so much was expected, has remedied none of these evils; it has rather aggravated them; for it has brought, in a sensible form, the reality of servitude home to the nation. The liberty of the press, the publication of debates, was tolerated only so long as they resounded with strains of adulation; but the moment that the real discussion of affairs commenced, the most rigid censorship of the press was introduced; and after the sittings of the diet closed, they prosecuted the members of it for the opinions they had expressed in it.

"The union, on one head, of the crown of the autocrat and of the constitutional king of Poland, is one of those political monstrosities which could not by possibility long endure. Every one foresaw that the kingdom of Poland must be to Russia the germ of liberal institutions, or itself perish under the iron hand of its despot. That question was soon resolved. If Alexander ever entertained the idea of reconciling the extent of his despotic power with the popularity of liberal institutions amongst us, it was but for a moment. He soon showed by his acts, that the moment he discovered that liberty would not become the blind instrument of slavery, he was to be its most violent persecutor. That system was

soon put in execution. Public instruction was first corrupted; it was made the mere instrument of despotism. An entire palatinate was next deprived of its representatives in the council; the chambers of the power of voting on the budget; new taxes were imposed without their authority; monopolies destructive of industry were created; and the treasury became a mere fountain of corruption, from whence, in lieu of the retrenchment which the nation had so often solicited, pensions and gratuities were distributed with the most scandalous profusion amongst the supporters of government. Calumny and espionage soon invaded the privacy, and destroyed the happiness, of domestic life; the ancient hospitality of the Poles was converted into a snare for innocence. Individual liberty, so solemnly guaranteed, was every day violated; the prisons were filled; and courts-martial, proceeding to take cognizance of civil offences, inflicted infamous and degrading punishments on citizens whose only fault was to have endeavoured to stem the torrent of corruption which overspread the country.

"In the ancient provinces of Poland, now incorporated with Russia, matters have been still worse. Not only have they not been incorporated with Poland, in violation of the promise to that effect made by the emperor Alexander to the congress of Vienna, but, on the contrary, everything has been systematically done which could eradicate in them any sentiment or recollection of nationality. The youths at school have been, in an especial manner, the object of persecution. All who were suspected of a leaning towards liberal or patriotic sentiments, were torn from their mothers' arms, and sent off to Siberia, or compelled to enter the army as private soldiers, though belonging to the first families in the country. In all administrative or public acts, the Polish language was suppressed, as well as in the common schools; imperial ukases annihilated alike the Polish rights and tribunals; the abuses of administration reduced the landed proprietors to despair. Since the accession of the emperor Nicholas, all these evils have rapidly increased; and intolerance, coming to the aid of despotism, has left nothing undone to extirpate the catholic worship, and force the Greek ritual in its stead."

We have quoted this manifesto thus fully, in order to present the reader with a Polish



view of the wrongs of that country. They were indeed heavy ones, and such as were highly calculated to excite desperation and resistance in a spirited and liberty-loving people. Unhappily, also, the character of the Russian government gives but little ground for the hope, that this recital of oppression was darkened in colour by a spirit of exaggeration. It is, in fact, generally admitted, that the Polish insurrection was the natural and inevitable result of the unjust and irritating proceedings of the Russian government.

Notwithstanding the issue of this manifesto, General Chlopicki still strove to bring about an accommodation with the czar, and sent the most earnest addresses to Nicholas, in the hope of obtaining from his moderation or compassion, that which he feared could not be extorted from him by force. When we regard the nature of the Russian government, we must at once perceive, that hopes of this kind were mere infatuation. It is not to be supposed, that it could be moved by entreaties to surrender a large and valuable territory, or to modify its course of action so largely, that the real, if not nominal, emancipation of Poland from its control would be the result. When, in addition, we contemplate the despotic and unbending character of the emperor Nicholas, the hopes of Chlopicki assume an air of baseless romance utterly inconsistent with the sober and practical views of a statesman and a soldier. Nicholas was not only inflexible, but irritated; and, in this instance, he was backed by the public feeling of the whole Russian people, who regarded the Poles with emotions of jealousy and enmity. The czar insisted on an unconditional surrender. "I am king of Poland, and I will drive her," said he; and this galling observation is an index to his entire bearing towards the patriots whom, disregarding the bitter provocations they had received, and the peculiar position they occupied, he never stooped to regard otherwise than as revolted subjects.

The Polish diet would not listen to the arrogant terms of Nicholas; and they held themselves in readiness for the inevitable war. The irresolute Chlopicki then resigned his dictatorship, which he ought never to have been permitted to occupy; his delays and frequent communications with the autocrat had given the latter the requisite time to assemble a force which would

eventually overwhelm the resources of the Poles; while the only chance of a favourable result on the part of the latter, lay in some rapid and immediate success before the czar could concentrate his scattered forces.

Disembarrassed of the influence of Chlopicki, the diet assembled on the 19th of January, 1831, to decide upon what step was to be taken by the nation. "Poles," said the president, Prince Adam Czartoryski, "our cause is sacred; our fate depends on the Most High; but we owe it to ourselves to transmit intact to posterity the honour of the nation enshrined in our hearts. 'Concord, courage, perseverance!' such is the sacred motto which can alone insure the glory of our country. Let us put forth all our strength, in order to found for ever our liberty and national independence." He was responded to by a shout of "There is no longer a Nicholas;" and then, amidst enthusiastic cheers and a frenzy of patriotic excitement, the diet voted the dethronement of the czar, and absolved the Polish nation from its oath of fidelity to him. A national government was then organised, under the presidency of Prince Czartoryski; a vigorous defence was resolved on, and General Chlopicki again accepted the command of the army; saying, with a modesty which betrayed an inward sense of his incompetence for such a post at such a time, "I only accept the command in order to hold it till the war has raised one of those great men who save nations." Alas for Poland! it had no man of towering genius to help it in its extremity; no Cromwell, Washington, or Napoleon arose at the eleventh hour to save it from the crushing despotism of its oppressor; the hour, indeed, had struck; but the man who should have been equal to the terrible emergency was not to be found. Nature is often a niggard of genius, especially of that genius which fits men for great deeds on the battle-field, and profound thoughts in the cabinets of statesmen.

The Polish army consisted altogether of 58,000 men, independent of the expected reserve which it was presumed that national enthusiasm would supply. About 14,000 of the regular army, however, was occupied as garrisons in fortresses, and were therefore unavailable for active service in the field. On the other hand, the Russian army, collected on the frontiers under the command of Marshal Diebitch, consisted



of 110,000 men, and had with it 396 pieces of artillery.

The campaign was opened, on the 5th of February, by the march of Diebitch towards Warsaw. The Polish army retreated before him to the village of Grochow, within a league of the capital, which it now became necessary to defend. On the 19th of February a battle took place at Grochow, which lasted the whole day; and, though it inflicted great loss on both sides, did not confer victory on either. Though the Poles were driven back some few hundred yards from the position they held in the morning, yet they felt that they had gained something of reputation by sustaining so desperate an engagement with the Russian forces, and coming out of the struggle unvanquished. The Grand-duke Constantine was present in the battle, though not in command; and it is said, that he could not avoid expressing some satisfaction at the conduct of the Polish army, which, under his severe training, had become one of the best disciplined in Europe.

A truce of three hours, entered into by the opposing forces for the purpose of burying their dead, was prolonged for a period of three days. On the 25th, both armies were again arrayed before each other, in order of battle, and 45,000 Poles were confronted by more than 100,000 Russians. Chlopicki betrayed his weakness by shedding tears of passionate grief, in despair of the salvation of his country. Happily, the army had other leaders, who knew the worthlessness of tears on such an occasion, and the value of resolution. The Polish spirit was high; and notwithstanding the great disparity of forces, the patriots were resolved on braving the struggle. At daybreak the battle of Praga commenced, and again the conflict was prolonged with great fury, and with various success, throughout the whole day. The object of the Russians was to take possession of the Alder wood, the retention of which conferred immense advantages, in a military point, upon the holders of it. Diebitch was successful; and, after a sanguinary struggle, drove out the Poles with his artillery; but they retired in good order, and the Russian cavalry suffered terribly in an attempt to throw them into confusion. During the night the Poles retired from Praga into Warsaw, so that the advantages of this action remained with the Russians; though the latter were still

unable to claim a victory. In fact, they had lost 10,000 men in these two battles—a greater number than the loss experienced by the Poles; but this mattered little, as they were so much better able to bear it, on account of their great numerical superiority. While these proceedings were taking place between the main armies of the contending nations, a body of Russian cavalry, amounting to nearly 10,000 men, was defeated and put to flight at Sieroczyn by a body of 2,800 Polish horse and foot. This circumstance, however, though it necessarily elated the victors, added little or nothing to their slender chance of ultimate success. Some further triumphs were obtained by this small division of the Polish forces; but it is needless here to chronicle petty engagements which could not lead to decisive results.

The Poles were, in fact, much alarmed at the dangerous proximity of the Russian army, under Diebitch, to their capital. That unfortunate nation saw that it was beset with dangers of the most menacing character; and the command of the army, which had recently been entrusted to Prince Radzivil, was conferred upon General Skrzynecki, whose military talents were regarded as of a higher order. As to Chlopicki, he was rendered incapable of active service by a severe wound, which confined him to his bed. Skrzynecki was in the prime of life—an important, if not essential, qualification in one who would lead a revolutionary army. Having been personally ill-treated by the Grand-duke Constantine, he had long acquired a popularity in the army, which his energy, and the courage and military capacity exhibited by him at the battles of Grochow and Praga, had much increased.

Skrzynecki has been described as “a pertinacious negotiator;” and his first exercise of power was an endeavour to negotiate a peace with Marshal Diebitch; but this he soon discovered to be a very useless proceeding. Diebitch had no power to do otherwise than execute the commands of the emperor, and persevere in hostilities until the Poles purchased a cessation of bloodshed by the acceptance of the galling terms of unconditional surrender. Preparations were then made for a renewal of active warfare: the Russians spread over a great extent of ground, in order that they might procure supplies of provisions with greater facility; while the Poles were en-



gaged in throwing up fresh intrenchments around Warsaw, at which the inhabitants, both male and female, laboured heroically both night and day. The Polish forces were also reinforced by ardent recruits; and the activity of the new commander kept up the spirits and enthusiasm of his troops.

Hostilities were first resumed by the Polish general. Having assembled his troops in silence, he left Warsaw at midnight on the 30th of March, having previously had the Praga bridge over the Vistula, and the road in the vicinity, covered with straw, to prevent the enemy from hearing his approach. His operations were favoured by a thick fog; and the Russians, not suspecting an attack, were for the most part sound asleep. So ably was the expedition conducted, that the surprise was complete, and the startled Russians were roused from their slumbers by the musketry of the foe. Their advanced posts, under Geismar, were assailed both in front and flank, thrown into confusion, and slaughtered in heaps. As they fled, they were attacked by another body of Poles, who charged the fugitives with the bayonet, and killed and captured great numbers of them. Those who escaped fled through a wood to Dembewilkie, where General Rosen was posted with 15,000 of their countrymen, in a position of great advantage, as the soft nature of the ground rendered it impracticable for cavalry or artillery.

These advantages, however, did not save the Russians from defeat, though they fought with great perseverance, and prolonged the battle during the whole day—the 31st of March. By the evening, however, the Poles obtained a decided victory; and the Russians fled in a state of panic, leaving 2,000 men dead upon the field, together with 6,000 prisoners, and nine pieces of cannon, in the hands of the enemy. The following day, the Russian force, which resembled rather a military mob than an army, was pursued by Lubinski, with his brigade of cavalry, for the space of twenty miles. Whole battalions of the terror-stricken Russians threw down their arms at his approach; and during the day he captured upwards of 5,000 more prisoners, many of whom, being Lithuanians, gladly entered the Polish ranks.

Fortune seemed disposed to smile upon the cause of the patriots; but Skrzynecki

wanted either the skill or the audacity to turn his advantages to account. He was urged to advance and attack the rear of the troops commanded by Diebitch in person; but he replied—"The roads are impracticable for artillery; I am chained to the great road of Siedlece, and I cannot profit by my victory." All movements calculated (in the event of their being successful) to lead to decisive results, were attended with great hazards, and these he feared to encounter, because he had no reserve; and, therefore, if his army was destroyed, the Polish cause was lost. For some days he remained in a state of inactivity, after which he assumed the offensive, and marched against Rosen, who was posted with 25,000 men on the Kostrzyn, covering the approaches to Siedlece. Again the Poles obtained a victory, on the 10th of April, at Iganie; and the Russians, disheartened by their previous defeats, fled tumultuously, and left half their cannon in the hands of the enemy. The troops defeated on this occasion were the Russian veterans on whom, since the recent Turkish war, the emperor Nicholas had bestowed the vain-glorious title of "the Lions of Varna." But a sad calamity awaited the victors; the terrible cholera had been advancing from India into Europe; it had already infected the Russian army, and the Poles took it from the prisoners whom they captured on that occasion. This circumstance prevented the Poles from following up their successes, and the Russian army was thus saved from destruction.

Yet the Poles were not uniformly successful. Their right wing, under Sierawiki and Pac, amounting to 15,000 men, which had advanced against the Russians at Lublin, experienced a reverse, and were driven back with the loss of 1,500 men. The brave and gifted Dwernecki, after achieving many triumphs, was defeated in Volhynia, and compelled to take refuge within the Austrian frontier, where he and his men were immediately disarmed and made prisoners. But Austria was not anxious for any overwhelming success on the part of Russia; and the Poles were mostly permitted to escape and return to the patriotic army. A partial rising in favour of the Poles, in Podolia and the Ukraine, was also crushed by the Russian forces; and, by its misfortune, helped to bind the chains it had striven to break.

While these operations were proceeding,



the main Polish army, under Skrzynecki, remained in inaction; while Diebitch, from whose military talents the emperor Nicholas had expected a speedy termination of the war, was waiting for reinforcements to fill the gaps which had been made in his ranks by Polish sabres. He had not fulfilled the expectations formed of him in consequence of his previous exploits, and especially his passage of the Balkan, in the recent war with the Turks; and it became evident that his powers were failing. The irresolution of the Polish general at this period has been both regretted and condemned, for a vigorous blow struck at this moment might have annihilated the Russian army, and inclined the emperor to grant the terms demanded by the Poles.

This time Diebitch, having received the reinforcements he had been waiting for, commenced offensive operations. Towards the end of April he advanced with 40,000 men to Jerusalem, while 15,000 more marched on Kaluckzyn; but he was soon compelled to retire, on account of the wasted state of the country, which precluded the possibility of obtaining supplies. Skrzynecki then conceived the plan of attacking the Russian head-quarters at Ostrolenka, and, by forcing back the Russian army, open a communication with Lithuania, where an insurrection in favour of the Poles was making considerable progress. This movement he succeeded in effecting, at the same time attacking and defeating the Russian rear-guard at Tykoczyn. Skrzynecki, however, in accomplishing it, laid himself open to attack—a circumstance of which Diebitch was not slow to take advantage. The result was a general battle, which took place at Ostrolenka on the 26th of May. The conflict was a furious and terrible one; both sides exhibited the most obstinate courage, and victory appeared to hang undecided between them. In many cases the combatants fought man to man and foot to foot; while Polish officers were seen, sword in hand, rushing to the front, singing the Warsaw hymn. At nightfall the fury of the fight slackened, and the Russians, retiring from the field, withdrew to the opposite side of the river Narew, leaving 10,000 dead or wounded men upon the ensanguined field. The Poles had gained an equivocal victory; but it was of a kind so fatal as to carry with it nearly all the consequences of defeat. They had lost no less than 7,000 men, including 270 officers—a much heavier

calamity to them than the loss of 10,000 men was to their foes. A detachment of 8,000 men, also, had been separated from the main army of the Poles, and left in a dangerous position in the forests of Lithuania. Skrzynecki summoned a council of war, and his officers strenuously advised a retreat—a decision which he unwillingly adopted. The Polish army, therefore, retired leisurely towards Warsaw, and gloomy forebodings filled the minds of many of the patriot leaders.

The sanguinary battle of Ostrolenka was the last fought by Diebitch. Knowing that he had incurred the serious displeasure of the emperor, and mentally pained by his own want of success, he sought relief from the melancholy which oppressed him in an immoderate use of the bottle. This probably subjected him to an attack of the cholera, which was then raging in the Russian army. He sunk rapidly beneath the disorder, and died at Pultusk, on the 10th of June. Nicholas, who had resolved to dismiss the living general, looked with a softened glance on the dead one, and the corpse of the once famous soldier was conveyed to St. Petersburg, where it was interred with much pomp. On the 27th of the same month in which Diebitch breathed his last, the Grand-duke Constantine died at Witepsk, in the arms of the much-loved wife for whom he had sacrificed the throne of Russia. Suspicions of poison were at first entertained, but it appears groundlessly, and his death is now generally attributed to cholera. Dr. Granville, an English physician of distinction, attributed the death of the grand-duke to the result of mental irritability, which terminated in apoplexy. "Constantine," observed that gentleman, "eccentric always, tyrannical, cruel, died at Warsaw, suddenly, in July, 1831, aged fifty-two years, after having caused rebellion in the country by his harsh treatment of the cadet officers. I saw and conversed with him on the parade and in his palace at Warsaw in December, 1828. His looks and demeanour sufficiently denoted to a medical man what he was, and what his fate would be. It has been said that he died of cholera; again, that he had been dispatched like his father. The physician-in-chief of the Polish military hospitals assured me, some years after, that he died apoplectic and in a rage."\*

\* For a remarkable letter by Dr. Granville, published on the occasion of the death of the emperor Nicholas, in which the severities and eccentricities



General Paskiewitch succeeded Diebitch in the command of the Russian army in Poland; but the combatants on both sides had suffered too much by the battle of Ostrolenka, to permit the immediate renewal of hostilities. Nearly a month was suffered to pass in inaction, during which the Polish general busied himself in recruiting his shattered ranks and preparing for a renewal of the struggle. Gloom, fear, and discontent prevailed in Warsaw, and the republicans of that city lost all their confidence in Skrzynecki, whom they suspected either of incompetence, or of treason to the national cause.

The resumption of hostilities led to results unfavourable to the Poles. The division which had been separated from their army after the battle of Ostrolenka, had thrown itself into Lithuania, where it met with considerable success in promoting the insurrection there; so much so, that it was joined by some thousand volunteers, including 340 young men from the university of Wilna. But there was no time to organise these recruits, and not even arms for them all; therefore, though this division of the Polish army proved successful in an engagement with a small body of Russian troops which endeavoured to arrest its progress, it suffered a defeat at the battle of Wilna of so serious a kind as to prove fatal to the Polish cause in Lithuania. The defeat was followed by another disaster; for most of the troops who retreated from the field of battle, were compelled to take refuge in the Prussian territory, where they were arrested and disarmed.

As the Poles were constantly weakened, the Russians were as constantly reinforced, and their relative strength became more disproportionate. The state of the Poles, which had never been too promising, became desperate; and eventual submission, with its accompanying degradation and severities, stared them in the face. Paskiewitch adopted a different plan to the one which had been pursued with so little advantage by his predecessor. It was to renounce the idea of attacking Warsaw on the right bank of the Vistula, where it was defended by the fortifications of Praga, and, instead, to march towards the Prussian frontier, where additional succours of every description

awaited him, to cross the Vistula at Oziak, and to return and attack Warsaw on the left bank. This plan was favoured by the dishonourable and mean attitude of Prussia, which, sinking the dignity of an independent state into the insignificance of a cringing vassal of Russia, openly assisted the latter power, and permitted provisions and munitions of war to be forwarded across its territory to the Russian head-quarters. "Time will show," observes a political writer, "whether, in so doing, Prussia has not put the seal to her own ultimate subjugation." In reply to repeated expostulations both from Poland and France, the Prussian cabinet answered, with a despicable quibble, that it had never professed to be neutral, but only inactive.

General Paskiewitch had 60,000 men and 300 pieces of cannon with him at Pultusk, and a reserve of 23,000 behind the Bug and the Wieprz. To oppose this force Skrzynecki had not 25,000 men. The Polish government made an eloquent appeal to the people for assistance, commencing—"In the name of God; in the name of the liberty of the nation, now placed between life and death; in the name of the kings and heroes who have combated in former days for its religion and independence; in the name of justice and of the deliverance of Europe; in the name of future generations who will else demand a terrible account of your abashed shades for their servitude, we call on all classes to come forward to defend their country." This appeal was generously responded to; but the hopeful enthusiasm which animated the people at the outbreak of the insurrection, now scarcely existed: it had sunk into a state not far removed from despair, in the presence of obstacles which proved insurmountable, and of difficulties which appeared endless.

The crossing of the Vistula by Paskiewitch, and the approach of the Russian army upon Warsaw, on its comparatively undefended side, created both consternation and fury in that city. Such was the outcry against Skrzynecki, that he was deprived of the command of the army, which was given to Dembinski, who had the courage to undertake it under circumstances which held out a promise of little else than martyrdom. But popular discontent was not alleviated by the removal of Skrzynecki, whose inactivity had led to suspicions of his fidelity. Furious riots

of the various members of the imperial family of Russia are attributed to the action of hereditary insanity, see Tyrrell's *History of the recent War with Russia*, vol. ii., p. 85.



broke out in Warsaw, and armed and excited mobs paraded the streets, rending the air with shouts of treason. Breaking into the prisons, they murdered the state prisoners, together with several Russians who were confined there. They also forced their way into the palace; and the following day the government, finding themselves unable to restrain the fury of a people by whom they were not respected, resigned. One of a more republican character succeeded, and General Krukowiecki, a man of considerable energy and talent, was appointed dictator.

It became evident, that the termination of this sad struggle could not long be averted. With the hope of avoiding the terrible loss of life which must necessarily ensue from the assault of Warsaw, Paskiewitch gave the Polish government till the 5th of September to surrender at discretion, assuring it that these were the only terms he was authorised to make. His offer was still indignantly rejected, and the Poles, in reply, dispatched 20,000 men to threaten the Russian communications, and to collect provisions in the surrounding provinces. This was an error, which left only 34,000 men to guard the intrenched camp at Warsaw. The city was defended on the left bank by three semicircular lines of vallations, the most extended of which did not embrace less than five leagues. The principal sallies were Wola, Pariz, and Marymont, connected together by lunettes. This immense development, to be adequately maintained, required an army three times as large as that of the Poles. Certain points, of necessity insufficiently manned, must, as a matter of course, fall into the hands of Paskiewitch; so that they had built forts for the enemy; and the very works which were intended to stop the besieger, became to him an additional element of success. To complete this misfortune, the points then best fortified were precisely those which the Russians could not attack.

At daybreak on the 6th of September, the Russians commenced their assault on the intrenched camp of the Poles at Warsaw, Paskiewitch having previously ordered large rations of brandy to be distributed to his troops. The attack began with a fire from 200 cannons, and the storm of destructive missiles was continued all day, and responded to by the Polish artillery. The fighting also was carried on with

the most determined fury, and on each side the slaughter was terrible. But the force of the Russians was overwhelming, and Krukowiecki lost courage, and informed the council of government that all was lost, and that nothing remained but to surrender. During the night he attempted to open a negotiation with Paskiewitch; but the Poles could not be induced to purchase a cessation of the horrors of a sanguinary and hopeless struggle at the price of an unconditional surrender. The next day, therefore, the battle was resumed, and the Poles fought with the fury of despair; but their bravery was unavailing against the crushing fire of the Russian guns, which established such a superiority over that of the Poles, as to induce Paskiewitch to order the assault. Again the Russians were indebted to the immense superiority of their artillery for their success. After a bloody resistance, several of the intrenchments were taken, and Krukowiecki agreed to a surrender, on condition that the Polish army was allowed to retire to Plock. This was granted, and Krukowiecki addressed the following communication to the emperor Nicholas:—"Sire,—Commissioned at this moment to speak to your imperial and royal majesty in the name of the Polish nation, I address myself, through his excellency Count Paskiewitch d'Erivan, to your paternal heart. In submitting unconditionally to your majesty, our king, the Polish nation knows that your majesty alone is competent to make the past forgotten, and to heal the deep wounds that have rent my country."

The following day the Russian troops marched triumphantly into Warsaw by the northern gates, and the Polish soldiers left it by the southern. They were followed by the members of the diet, and by many persons who had distinguished themselves during the insurrectionary war, and who chose a voluntary banishment rather than a dependence on the hoped-for mercy of the emperor. During this last struggle, in a noble but most unhappy cause, in which the natural rights of humanity were arrayed against the overwhelming legions of a cruel and unyielding despotism, 5,000 Poles had perished, and 4,000 more were taken prisoners. The Russians did not purchase their tarnished triumph except at a fearful price of blood: their loss, during these two days of terror, was admitted by their general to have amounted to 5,378 in killed



and wounded; while it is asserted by other authorities to have reached the startling number of 20,000 men!

The Polish army, which had retired from Warsaw, was followed by the Russians, and summoned to surrender, which it indignantly refused to do. The struggle was resumed for a few days; but the Poles were almost without ammunition, and in a miserable and almost destitute state. They were soon compelled to cross the Prussian frontier, and lay down their arms; and thus the struggle terminated, after having lasted nearly eight months, and cost Russia the astounding loss of 180,000 men. The Poles had displayed a patriotism and courage which elicited the admiration of Europe; and the failure of their cause produced sorrow in many of the capitals of the continent, and passionate excitement in others. In Paris the public grief was so intense, that for some days the city remained in a state of stupor, and the theatres were all closed.

The emperor Nicholas was unmoved either by the prostrate and unhappy condition of the Poles, or by the sympathy manifested for them, and the execration poured out against Russia in the most free and enlightened states of the continent. He exhibited the most implacable resentment and relentless severity against the unfortunate people whom the harshness of his government had driven into insurrection. Many members of the noblest families in Warsaw were seized, and sent to labour for life in the mines of Siberia, or drag out a wretched existence in its miserable deserts. More were sent to serve as common soldiers

in the Caucasus and other Asiatic provinces, and thus became instrumental in inflicting upon others that loss of liberty and nationality, for the assertion of which they themselves were paying so terrible a penalty. As to the Polish soldiers, the oath of allegiance to the emperor was forced upon them by threats of death beneath the agony of the knout. No gleam of generosity, no touch of mercy, irradiated or softened the harsh nature of the czar; the victim was at his feet, and he resolved that it should rise no more. He determined on the utter extinction of that feeling of nationality in the Polish breast, which, from its intensity, seems destined to survive all misfortunes. To effect this purpose, the constitution granted to Poland was formally abrogated, and another form of government, called the "Organic Statute," introduced. The universities of Wilna and Warsaw, as well as many minor schools, were abolished, and the public libraries and museums carried away to St. Petersburg and other parts of Russia. Various other measures were taken to destroy the nationality of Poland, to abolish its language, and to overthrow its religion\*—measures which have ever since been steadily persisted in. A great number of the patriots left their fatherland, and emigrated to foreign countries. But the seal was yet to be placed to the misfortunes of Poland, the stone yet to be laid on the grave of its nationality. This was done in 1832, when it was declared *an integral part of the Russian empire*.

From this state of national and political death, we fear that there is no resurrection for the Poles.† Sad as their fate is, they

\* Ivan Golovin, a Russian exile who has written much concerning his country, observes—"If the Russo-Greek church was tolerant under Catherine II., it has ceased to be so under Nicholas. He has forced the united Greeks to separate themselves from the pope, and to re-enter the bosom of the Russian church. *In Poland he has erected a Russian altar by the side of every catholic altar.* The Armenians of the Gregorian sect are under process of conversion. The patriarch of Echmiadzin, by way of paying court to the czar, has gradually obliterated, one after another, the differences that used to exist between the Greco-Russian form of worship and the Armenian. There is not a single sect, down even to the Lutheran peasants of Esthonia, that has not been tried to be converted to the Greek faith by the bait of grants of land and enlarged privileges. This bait has led to some ridiculous results in the Caucasus among the Ossetians, who, receiving a shirt and a silver rouble for each conversion, have managed to get the reward three or four times over, by being converted over and over again, in different localities. The conse-

quence is, that the official list of baptisms is greater than the whole number of inhabitants, which does not, however, prevent them from still belonging to their old faith. Not a single Ossetinian has ever been seen in the Christian church of Kasbek!"

† "Is there a Poland or is there none?" inquires Golovin; who thus replies:—"That is the question first put when one treats of that country. *Finis Poloniæ!* exclaimed Kosciuszko on the field of battle, throwing away his sword, on being made prisoner by the Russians; since which time those words have been repeated by less distinguished generals or patriots; and so it is not lost, but still lives, or if politically lost, it lives in the hearts of millions; and there is indeed something very noble in the feeling of those Poles who, notwithstanding all their sufferings and their privations, believe in the rising again of their country. 'A nation,' say they, 'which has a literature and a history, does not perish.' But the history of a nation closes with it, and the Roman empire also has its literature, and that of no mean kind. Nations die like individuals; and the absorption of smaller nationalities



have suffered extinction as a separate nation in Europe in consequence of their own errors. Poland had a selfish, turbulent, and proud nobility; a superstitious and domineering priesthood, and a serf population. These were its faults, or rather its crimes; and for national crimes there is, in the inexorable march of events, no forgiveness. Thus it fell at last to be absorbed into the gigantic territories of a neighbour to whom, at one period, it was an object of dread. Let us trust that the other nations of Europe may profit by the tragic lesson; that nobles may remember, that a too selfish adherence to their own interests may eventually cause the destruction of their order; that priesthoods may understand, that a rigid enforcement of the practices of a blind and decrepid superstition crushes out the spirit of a people;\* and that the latter may comprehend, that those who are content to live in a state of serfdom under a native government, deserve their fate, and have no security that they may not become serfs under a foreign yoke. On the tomb of Polish nationality might justly be inscribed the words—"Slain by the vices of the Polish nobles and priesthood, and by the apathy of a people who knew not liberty."

Poland perished by its crimes; and the western nations of Europe have been punished ever since, for their connivance at its spoliation, by their dread of Russian preponderance. Had they firmly resisted the first partition of Poland in 1772,† the second and the third partition would never have taken place. These reduced Poland to the state of weakness which eventually caused her to fall prostrate and helpless beneath the iron foot of Russia. In 1772, England did not even utter a word of expostulation when Catherine II. and Frederic the Great bribed Austria to assist them in the first partition of Poland, by which it lost more than one-third of its whole extent. England and France stood aloof, and beheld, with apparent indifference, this inexcusable breach of those laws which are presumed to regulate the intercourse between civilised nations: they suffered the balance of power not only to be disturbed, but to be rudely overthrown. It is true that the time of the imperial and royal

bandits had been well chosen. England was tired of its long contests with France; it was already engaged in that quarrel with America which led to the great war of independence; and the attention of the English people was engaged in political struggles at home, where they feared that the bigotry and despotic character of an ignorant and obstinate young king, assisted by a tory ministry, would, if not resisted, force on them that political servitude to which so many of the continental nations were the prey. On the other hand, France, exhausted by the wars into which it had been plunged by the restless ambition of Louis XIV., and its people irritated and nearly maddened by an accumulation of misery, and by the corruption and heartlessness of the mass of the privileged orders both in church and state, was hurrying onward to that terrible revolution, when the sins of a blind aristocracy, and the selfishness of a corrupt priesthood, were, together with the wrongs of an outraged and despairing people, to be washed out in a deluge of blood!

Oh! the time was well chosen: France was half mad with her own miseries, and the hands of England were filled with her own immediate affairs. There never was a period when our exercise of the doctrine of non-intervention in the proceedings of other countries, seemed to be more profitable. What, it might be urged, could these two countries do, when Russia, Prussia, and Austria, each armed to the teeth, were leagued together for a deed of wrong? Assuredly the question constitutes a difficulty: to this the western powers closed their eyes; but that is not the manner in which difficulties are overcome. They must be met, and met with daring and resolution; and it is better when they are met at once. They are commonly increased by delay, as this has been. If Poland had not fallen, Turkey would not be in danger from the overshadowing might of Russia; nor would Prussia be her vassal, or the Baltic states look towards her with furtive and uneasy glances. The difficulties of the Eastern question, as well as others in connection with the pretensions of Russia, may almost be said to have arisen out of the fall of Poland: the

by larger is doubtless the goal to which mankind are irremediably advancing."

\* A fact of which Spain is a prominent and most extraordinary instance. The priesthood of Poland

were bitterly fanatical in their adherence to the tenets and forms of catholicism; that of Spain was superstitiously and savagely mad.

† See *ante*, pp. 288, 289.



strength she lost, Russia gained; and the acquisition of that territory opened to her a highway into the heart of Europe, and made her influence predominant throughout a great part of Germany. Starting from Warsaw, the battalions of Russia could soon thunder at the gates of Berlin; and in that circumstance lies the clue to the Prussian subservience to Russian claims, and Prussian complicity with Russian guilt. Since Poland has been absorbed by Russia, Prussia has ceased to be one of the great powers of Europe, and has, we repeat, become merely a vassal of the czar; a fact which time will make increasingly evident. Austria cannot maintain herself against Russia, for her vast standing army is required to play the part of police at home, and to force upon disaffected nations the hateful yoke of a cruel, intolerant, and despotic government. Russia well knows that now she has but little to fear from either of her great German neighbours. What power, then, remains to check those aggressions which she has from time to time perpetrated in the east, north, and west of Europe? That of France and England, whose arms would, in such contests, ever have been aided by the dauntless battalions of Poland, had they interfered to save her from partition in the hour of her trial and desolation. Now the sabres and bayonets of Poland follow the imperial standard of the czar, and the revenues of Poland assist in filling his treasury: but yet it is France and England who have to resist the encroachments of Russia; alone they have to oppose the hydra which the might of Poland would have enabled them to smite.

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to scourge us."

England and France were deedless, and even silent, in 1772, and passive during the subsequent partitions of Poland in 1793 and 1795. The punishment of this apathetic complicity was remote, certainly, but it was inevitable. For more than half a century the "Eastern difficulty" has been the spectre which disturbs the tranquillity of their statesmen; and in 1853 and 1854 both countries were compelled to tax their resources to the utmost—to pour out their troops incessantly upon the shores of Russia—to keep mighty fleets in the Baltic and the Euxine—to add millions upon millions to their national debt—to bedew the soil of

Russia with the blood of their best and bravest troops; and all merely with the result of administering a temporary check to the designs of Russia. Surely, whatever the condition of England and France in 1772, they gained nothing by their connivance in the first deep gash inflicted upon Poland, and their silence respecting it. Certainly the western nations were not then what they are now, neither was Russia; in fact, had her internal, social, and political development been progressively equal to theirs, she would now be irresistible. Happily, despotism in some measure disarms itself, for it emasculates its subjects.

In closing this chapter, we may return to our narrative to mention that, in 1833, the liberal and gifted English statesman, Lord Durham, was dispatched from this country on a special mission to Russia, principally with the object of inducing the emperor to soften the severity of his proceedings towards the unhappy persons who had been engaged in the recent Polish insurrection. The effort was altogether without success. Nicholas was not to be moved; and observed, that all Poland was not worth the Russian officers killed at Warsaw. In fact, the statesman found that the language which our national poet has used respecting one of the most haughty heroes of republican Rome, was also true of the czar—that "there was no more mercy in him than there is milk in a male tiger." Regarding the stern, pitiless haughtiness of the unforgiving autocrat, and his domineering pride, we may continue the quotation, and add—"He wanted nothing of a god but eternity, and a heaven to throne in."

The emperor Nicholas has, however, had his apologists for his conduct with regard to the Poles: they affirm, that his vindictiveness arose rather from policy than from cruelty of disposition. A Russian nobleman, while conversing with the Marquis Custine, observed—"You can have no adequate idea of the intense intolerance of the Russians; those whose minds are cultivated, and whom business brings into intercourse with western Europe, take the utmost pains to conceal the predominant national sentiment, which is the triumph of the *Greek orthodoxy*\*—with them syno-

\* Ivan Golovin, while admitting the intolerance of his countrymen, yet is not disposed to believe them fanatical. He observes—"As regards the fanaticism of the Russian, I do not believe in it.



nymous with the policy of Russia. Without keeping this in view, nothing can be explained either in our manners or our politics. You must not believe, for example, that the persecutions in Poland were the effect of the personal resentment of the emperor: they were the result of a profound and deliberate calculation. These acts of cruelty are meritorious in the eyes of true believers; it is the Holy Spirit who so enlightens the sovereign, as to elevate him above all human feelings; and it is God who blesses him, as the executor of his high designs. By this manner of viewing things, judges and executioners become so much the greater saints in proportion as they are greater barbarians. Your legitimate journals little know what they are doing when they seek for allies among schismatics. Depend upon it, we shall see a Euro-

pean revolution before we shall see the emperor of Russia acting in good faith with a catholic power; the protestants are at least open adversaries; besides, they will more readily reunite with the pope than with the chief of the Russian autocracy; for the protestants, having beheld all their creeds degenerate into systems, and their religious faith transformed into philosophic doubt, have nothing left but their sectarian pride to sacrifice to Rome; (?) whereas the emperor possesses a real and positive spiritual power, which assuredly he will never voluntarily relinquish. Rome, and all that can be connected with the Romish church, has no more dangerous enemy than the autocrat of Moscow, visible head of his own church; and I am astonished that Italian penetration has not discovered the danger that threatens from that quarter."

### CHAPTER LVIII.

WAR BETWEEN MEHEMET ALI AND THE SULTAN; PROSTRATION OF THE POWER OF THE LATTER; MAHMOUD APPLIES TO ENGLAND FOR ASSISTANCE, AND IS REFUSED; HE SOLICITS HELP FROM THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS, WHO EAGERLY EMBRACES THE OPPORTUNITY THUS GIVEN HIM OF INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE PORTE; RUSSIA SENDS A FLEET TO THE BOSPHORUS, AND LANDS AN ARMY WITHIN SIGHT OF CONSTANTINOPLE; SETTLEMENT OF THE QUARREL BETWEEN MEHEMET ALI AND THE SULTAN; NICHOLAS OBTAINS FROM THE PORTE THE TREATY OF UNKIAR-SKELESSI, AS A RECOMPENSE FOR HIS SERVICES; CONSEQUENT CLOSING OF THE DARDANELLES TO ALL FOREIGN SHIPS OF WAR, EXCEPT THOSE OF RUSSIA; HOSTILITIES ARE RECOMMENCED BETWEEN THE SULTAN AND THE PASHA OF EGYPT; DEATH OF SULTAN MAHMOUD, AND INTERFERENCE OF AUSTRIA, FRANCE, AND ENGLAND; BOMBARDMENT OF BEYROUT, AND CAPTURE OF SIDON AND ACRE; SUBMISSION OF MEHEMET ALI; MODIFICATION OF THE TREATY OF UNKIAR-SKELESSI; THE CAUCASUS; RUSSIA, BY VIRTUE OF THE TREATY OF ADRIANOPLE, ASSUMES TO REGARD IT AS A PROVINCE OF THE EMPIRE; NICHOLAS IS UNABLE TO INDUCE THE MOUNTAINEERS TO SUBMIT TO HIS RULE; BLOCKADE OF THE CIRCASSIAN COAST; SEIZURE OF THE ENGLISH MERCHANTMAN, VIXEN; NICHOLAS VISITS THE CAUCASUS; FORMAL DECLARATION OF WAR BY RUSSIA; SERIOUS REVERSES OF THAT POWER, AND ITS FAILURE TO SUBDUCE THE MOUNTAINEERS.

TURKEY had been much weakened by the war that terminated with the treaty of Adrianople, and its progress towards probable dismemberment seemed to be greatly accelerated. Sultan Mahmoud, with unabated perseverance, was actively employed in endeavouring to create a new army and a new navy, and in improving his ruined finances. Yet powerful and distant pashas speculated on the ruin of the Ottoman em-

pire, and debated with themselves whether they were able to set the sultan at defiance, and to make themselves independent rulers.

For some time Mehemet Ali—an extraordinary man, who had raised himself from the position of a small shopkeeper—had been pasha of Egypt. Not satisfied with this amount of power and distinction, he, in 1831, obtained possession of the island military life, and therefore does not much care, when once in for it, how or when it ends; and to the priest who says to him, 'My children, you suffer here, but in another world the nobles will burn on a huge pile of fire, and you will have to throw on the faggots,' he replies, 'We shall be sent a long way, then, to fetch the wood.'



of Candia, and then aimed at acquiring Syria. Pleading, as an excuse, his desire to recover some Egyptians who, being discontented with the exactions of his government, had settled in that country, he sent his son, Ibrahim Pasha, against it with a large army. Syria, as well as Egypt, was an integral part of the Ottoman empire; a firman was therefore issued by the sultan, declaring Mehemet a traitor, and a considerable Turkish force was sent against him. An active campaign followed, and terminated in favour of Ibrahim Pasha, who obtained several victories over the Turks, gained the command of the whole sea-coast of Syria, captured the fortresses of Acre, Tripoli, and Aleppo, and took great numbers of prisoners, and many trophies of war. So remarkable were the successes of Ibrahim, who possessed great military genius, and was well versed in the strategy of modern Europe, that to his Egyptian and Arab followers (who recognise a fatality in all things), he appeared an instrument in the hand of God, to reinstate the true faith, and punish the degenerate Turks who had strayed from the precepts of the prophet. A similar feeling prevailed among the forces of the sultan, who, in the December of 1832, were utterly overthrown at the decisive battle of Konieh. The strength of the Porte, exhausted by previous efforts, was almost annihilated. Even Constantinople was in danger from the ambition of Mehemet and the valour of Ibrahim. Such was the fame of the latter throughout the East, that all the warlike tribes in Asia Minor regarded him as the Man of Destiny, who was to restore the faith of the prophet in its purity—were prepared to join his standard, and endea-

vour to establish a new dynasty on the throne of Constantinople.

In this hour of peril the Porte applied for assistance to England; but that power answered, that however much inclined they were to assist Turkey, they had not at that moment the means of affording the required assistance.\* The foreign policy of this country is a strange enigma, or a series of almost unpardonable errors. Had Ibrahim Pasha crushed the might of the sultan, how long would it have been before the two-headed eagle of Russia had waved over the palaces of the Ottoman and the mosque of St. Sophia? Could the resources of such a petty state as Egypt long have contended with the countless battalions and the subtle arts of the autocrat of the north? The apathy of England might have proved the easy triumph of Russia. "Never," observes Alison, with zealous truth, "was such an opportunity afforded for the establishment of a powerful and efficacious barrier against Russia in the East; imagination itself could not have conceived anything more favourable. The British government was applied to by an ancient ally for succour against a rebellious vassal, and an opportunity was afforded of rendering a service to the Ottoman rulers of so essential a kind as to insure future gratitude and dependence, and counteract, in a great degree, the growing influence of the Muscovites at the court of Constantinople. Incalculable would have been the effects of such aid, if promptly rendered; it would probably have restored the balance of power in the East, and averted, if not altogether prevented, the terrible war of 1854 in the Black Sea. Unhappily, England was not at this period in a condition to take advan-

\* The apathy and perplexing policy of England has alienated Turkey from it, and caused it to lose its character for integrity and impartiality with that state. Miss Pardoe, in her interesting book on *The City of the Sultan*, remarks:—"A Turk of high rank and considerable abilities, who had an understanding to observe, and a heart to feel the position of his country, was one day conversing with me on her foreign political relations, when he exclaimed, with a sudden burst of unaffected energy—'France has beguiled us, it is true; but France has been at least comparatively honest in her supineness. She has never affected a wish to become the foster-mother of the world; but England—England, madam, which has boasted of her universal philanthropy—which has knocked away the fetters of millions of the blacks—England, not contented while among her nobles, in her House of Commons, and even at the very meetings of her lower classes, she was making a vaunt of her all-embracing love, and

of her sympathy with the oppressed—not contented with seeing Poland weep tears of blood, and only cease to exist when the last nerves of her heart had been wrung asunder—your own happy England, secure in her prosperity and her power, is now standing tamely by, while the vast Ottoman empire—the gorgeous East, which seems to have been made for glory and for greatness—is trampled by a power like Russia! She might have saved us—she might save us yet. Where is her gallant navy? Where are her floating fortresses? But above all, where is the heart which has so many hands to work its will? Is it the expense of a war from which she shrinks? Surely her policy is not so shallow, for she cannot require to be told how deeply her commercial interests must be compromised by the success of Russia. But I will not pursue so painful a subject. As individuals we respect the English; but their political character is lost in the East. We have no longer faith in England.'









*Entrance of the Port of London at London Bridge*



tage of the extraordinary good fortune thus thrown in her way. So great had been the reduction of her land and sea forces, in consequence of the growing passion for economy which had prevailed ever since the peace, and which the contraction of the currency had now rendered a matter of necessity, that Great Britain had no forces at her disposal adequate for an Eastern war; and the few which she had were absorbed in propping up a rickety and unpopular government against the feelings of the Portuguese at Lisbon."

The power of France, at this period, to assist the sultan was scarcely greater than that of England; and had it been applied to, a response of regretful denial would probably have been sustained in that quarter also. But assistance was not applied for, as the conduct of Napoleon, and of the French government since his fall, had been such as to create in the Porte a jealousy and distrust of it.

Where was Turkey to turn for help? The mediation of the European powers had effected a truce; but, in spite of it, Ibrahim pushed on and occupied Brousa, the ancient Asiatic capital of the Ottoman empire. The ruin of the sultan appeared to be inevitable; and in this almost hopeless condition, he resolved to appeal for assistance to his natural enemy, and to throw himself into the arms of Russia. Mahmoud, therefore, addressed an autograph letter to the emperor Nicholas, soliciting help against his rebellious vassal, whose conduct he represented as a part of the general system of revolution which had recently been so prominent in Europe, and which all its monarchs were interested in subduing. Nicholas saw the latent advantages of the opportunity thus afforded him of establishing an exclusive protectorate over the sultan and his dominions. The autocrat gave an immediate and favourable response, and tendered the assistance of a Russian fleet under Admiral Greig, and a body of 25,000 men, to act on the banks of the Danube. By the 20th of January, 1833, a Russian squadron of four sail-of-the-line and six frigates, with 6,000 troops on board, took up its station in the Bay of Bourgas, near the mouth of the Bosphorus. In the meantime, the interference of France had produced a settlement of the quarrel, and the sultan had consented to the cession of Syria and Egypt, in perpetuity, to Mehemet Ali.

The sultan, who dreaded his new Russian friends, hastened to inform them that their assistance was no longer needed, and that their force might be recalled. This was not what the latter desired, and they hesitated. At this point, a renewal of hostilities was threatened, by the refusal of Mehemet Ali to ratify the proposed treaty. The Russian government no sooner received this intelligence than they hurried a fresh squadron laden with troops from Odessa, which, effecting a junction with the former one in the Bay of Bourgas, they both immediately sailed for the Bosphorus. Arriving on the 5th of June, they passed the Straits, and landed their troops on the Asiatic shore, within sight of Constantinople.

Startled at this new phase of the "Eastern difficulty," the English government sent Lord Durham to St. Petersburg, partly, as we have already related, to induce the emperor Nicholas to temper his severity against the Poles, but also to bring about a pacification of the quarrel between the sultan and Mehemet Ali, and thus render the prolonged interference of Russia unnecessary. The English diplomatist was received with great distinction, but he was unable to affect the conduct of the czar either with regard to Poland or Turkey. Nicholas had no intention of withdrawing his troops from the Turkish soil, or recalling his armed ships from the waters of the Bosphorus, until he had obtained a contemplated advantage at the expense of the sultan, which, it will be seen, could scarcely have been extorted from the latter even after an unsuccessful campaign.

The adherence of Russia to the cause of Turkey, induced Mehemet Ali to change his mind, and a treaty was therefore concluded between him and the sultan, on the 6th of May, 1833, by which Ali was recognised as an independent sovereign, and received the governments of Jerusalem, Tripoli, Aleppo, Damascus, and Adana, in addition to that of Egypt. Delivered from the danger which threatened his destruction, the sultan now addressed himself to the onerous task of getting rid of his officious friends the Russians, whose friendship, he began to fear, might be as dangerous as their enmity. Before the czar consented to withdraw his forces from the Turkish territory, he obtained from the Porte, in presumed recompense of his services, the since much-talked-of treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, which was signed on the 8th of July,



and provided, that during a period of eight years, there should be an offensive and defensive alliance between the two powers, by virtue of which, Russia consented to place her whole fleets and armies at the disposal of the Porte. For this wonderful generosity, the Porte was of course to make some acknowledgment and return. This was the insertion of a secret article in the treaty, to the effect that "the Ottoman Porte should be bound, in virtue of its obligations towards Russia, to close the Straits of the Dardanelles; that is to say, *not to permit any ship of war of a foreign power, to enter those straits under any pretence whatever.* This separate and secret article shall have the same force and effect as if it had been inserted, word for word, in the public and patent treaty."

An agreement of this nature could not possibly long remain a secret, and must, necessarily, have become known as soon as it was reduced to practice. The closing of the Dardanelles to all foreign vessels of war, except those of Russia, was a measure affecting every European nation possessed of a naval power. A French vessel was the first refused a passage. England and France took the alarm, and explanations were demanded. The Turkish cabinet was embarrassed, and denied the existence of the secret article. It produced the public treaty, and added, that as an independent state, it was at liberty to contract alliances with any power that it might deem proper, and was under no obligation to justify its conduct to any foreign government. England and France were neither inclined nor prepared to proceed to extremities, and therefore the Dardanelles remained closed to all ships of war except those of Turkey and Russia. This circumstance greatly complicated the difficulties of the Eastern question, which, it became evident, must one day—and that, probably, no very distant one—be brought to a violent settlement of such a kind as no one could foretell its termination. The closing of the Dardanelles to all European ships of war save those of the czar, in fact went far to convert the Black Sea into a Russian lake. The emperor Nicholas had triumphed completely for the time, but, happily, the end was not yet.

The peace concluded between Mehemet Ali and the sultan was soon to be interrupted. Jealousies had long existed between England and France respecting Egypt.

Since the time of Napoleon, the French had endeavoured to establish their influence on the shores of the Nile; while the importance of Egypt to England, as a rapid means of communication with India, had rendered it necessary that she should have such a preponderance in that country, as would lead at least to a secure transit through it. On this point a coldness arose between the governments of France and England, and led to a divergence of policy. France adopted the cause of Mehemet Ali, and obtained a considerable ascendancy at Cairo; while England strove to regain her influence with the Porte by supporting it against the Egyptians. The British cabinet, also, were desirous of neutralising the preponderating influence which Russia, by her offers of assistance to the Porte, had acquired over it; and success so far attended its efforts, that it obtained a commercial treaty from the sultan, by which the Dardanelles was open to English merchant ships.

Mutual recriminations passed between the sultan and Mehemet Ali, who aimed at the subjection of all Arabia to his authority, and, counting upon the support of France, adopted a very haughty tone. Each side again prepared for war; and in the June of 1839 hostilities were recommenced by the sultan. England and France both took the alarm, and united their efforts to promote peace, as they feared to give the Russians a pretext for making another military excursion to the neighbourhood of Constantinople, and of further increasing their sinister influence over the Porte. The efforts of the French and English cabinets were unable to prevent the outbreak of war; and, on the 24th of June, the power of the sultan was laid prostrate by the battle of Nezib. The victory of Ibrahim and his Egyptians was decisive; and a Turkish fleet, which had been sent to Alexandria to act against that of Mehemet, treacherously joined the foe which it was to have engaged. Turkey was exhausted; she had not another fleet or army ready, and must have fallen before the sword of the powerful Mehemet and his gifted son but for the intervention of the European powers. The impetuous Sultan Mahmoud was spared from the pain of hearing of this defeat. For some time his health had been failing, and he expired a few days before the news of the battle reached Constantinople, and threw both the seraglio and capital into









BOMBARDMENT  
 OF  
 ST. JEAN D'ACRE.  
 BY ADMIRAL SIR CHARLES NAPIER  
 NOV. 3 1840

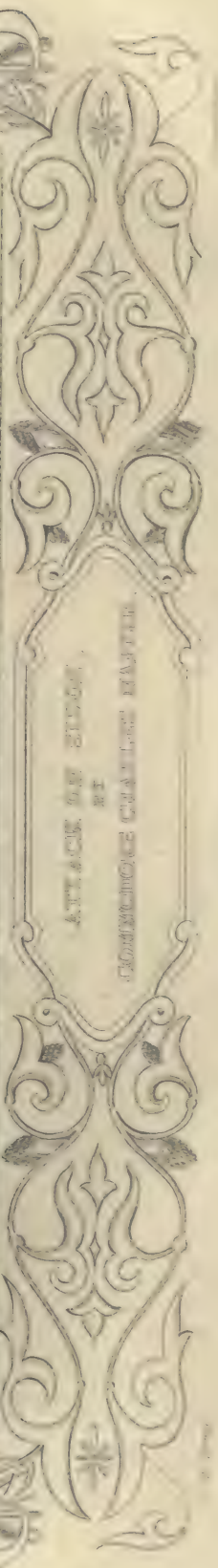








THE BATTLE OF THE SEA OF JAPAN. THE RUSSIAN BATTLESHIP 'PETER THE GREAT' CAPTURED BY THE JAPANESE.



ATTACK OF THE  
RUSSIAN  
SQUADRON

THE JAPANESE PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY



consternation. Notwithstanding his great talents and energy, the Turkish empire declined rapidly during the latter years of his reign, partly from having been subjected to a series of severe trials, and partly in consequence of his own irascible and imprudent conduct. Under his reforming system the Turks had ceased to be exclusively Asiatic, and had failed in becoming European. He was succeeded by his son Abdul-Medjid, the present sultan, then but a youth of sixteen.

On the death of Mahmoud, the Porte made proposals of peace to Mehemet Ali, offering him the hereditary government of Egypt, and the government, during his life, of that portion of Syria which extended from the Red Sea to the Sea of Tiberias, together with the fortress of St. Jean d'Acre. Mehemet, in reply, demanded the absolute and hereditary possession of all these territories. Austria, France, and England again interfered; for they all dreaded that Russia should again interpose alone in the affairs of Turkey, and take military possession of Constantinople, under pretence of defending it against the Egyptians.

After much diplomacy, a treaty was signed between Turkey, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, with the object of bringing the Eastern troubles to a termination. France, unfortunately, instigated by a jealousy of England, stood aloof, and countenanced the victorious pasha of Egypt. This, however, did not prevent the other powers from presenting terms for the acceptance of Mehemet, which, if he rejected, it was arranged that ulterior measures should be resorted to. The adoption of this proceeding without the concurrence of France, so irritated the government and people of that country, that the most intemperate invectives were uttered against the allied powers, and more particularly against England. So great, indeed, was the anger exhibited towards this country, that serious apprehensions were entertained of the outbreak of war between it and France. As Mehemet Ali remained inflexible, the allies resolved to strike a decisive blow in the Levant, before any steps could be taken by the French fleet, then lying in the Bay of Besika, to prevent it. An English fleet, under Admirals Stopford and Napier, was sent to the coast of Syria, where it was to be joined by a few Austrian ships of war. The Egyptian generals were

summoned, in the name of the allied powers, to evacuate Syria; and on their disregard of this intimation, Beyrout was bombarded (August 20th, 1840) for nine successive days, and, after a gallant resistance, reduced to ashes, and abandoned by the troops of Mehemet. The British fleet then sailed for Acre. Sidon was first stormed, and taken; and Tripoli, Tortosa, and Latakia, dissatisfied with the Egyptian government, opened their gates. Then the famous fortress of Acre, which had resisted the arms of Napoleon, and was deemed impregnable throughout the East, was bombarded and taken. This was decisive; the Syrian tribes declared in favour of the sultan; the forces of Ibrahim were deprived of resources, cut off from Egypt, and surrounded by enemies. Mehemet Ali, seeing that further resistance would be ruinous, if not impossible, wisely submitted (December, 1840) to the terms of the allies. To save Alexandria from bombardment, he also restored the Turkish fleet, which had been treacherously surrendered to him, and withdrew his troops from Syria and Candia, remaining content with the hereditary possession of Egypt. Thus Turkey was saved from destruction by the arms of one who had been a vassal of the sultan, and delivered from the treacherous kindness of the czar. These facts, which we have run very hastily over, though no part of the internal history of Russia, are yet indispensable to the understanding of the relative position of that empire to the other great powers of Europe, and especially to the comprehension of the causes of the great war of 1853-'4.

Happily, the hostile feeling of France towards the allies, and this country in particular, had yielded to the representations of the British cabinet; and a uniformity of opinion and action on the question of Eastern affairs was restored. To compliment France, the allies left to its government the proposal of the terms of pacification to be agreed to by them all. These were—1. That the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles should be closed against ships of war of all nations, without distinction. 2. That the pashalic of Egypt, in hereditary right, should be secured to Mehemet Ali and his descendants. 3. That guarantees should be given for ameliorating the condition of the Christian inhabitants of Syria.

An additional and highly important treaty, regarding the vital subject of the



navigation of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, was entered into between Turkey and the whole of the five great European powers, on the 13th of March, 1841. By this convention, which regulated the affairs of European nations in connection with the East, until the breaking out of the war of 1853-'4, it was stipulated—

- “1. That the Straits of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, in conformity with the ancient usage of the Ottoman empire, shall remain permanently closed against all foreign vessels of war, as long as the Ottoman Porte shall enjoy peace.
2. The sultan declares, on his side, that he is firmly resolved to maintain immovably the ancient rule of the empire, in virtue of which, it is forbidden to vessels of war of all nations to enter the Dardanelles or the Bosphorus; and in virtue of which these Straits remain for ever closed, as long as the Ottoman Porte shall be at peace.
3. His majesty the emperor of Austria, and their majesties the king of the French, the queen of Great Britain, the king of Prussia, and the emperor of Russia, on their part, engage to respect that resolution of the sultan, and to act in conformity with the principle there expressed.
4. The ancient rule of the Ottoman empire being thus established and recognised, the sultan reserves to himself the right to grant firmans of passage to small vessels of war, which, in conformity with usage, are employed in the service of ambassadors of friendly powers.
5. The sultan reserves to himself the right to notify the terms of this treaty to all the powers with which he is on terms of amity, and to invite their accession to it.”

We must glance backward for a few years, and take a rapid glance at the historical conduct of Russia with respect to the Caucasus. This extensive mountain chain extends between the Black and Caspian seas, and forms part of the boundary between Asia and Europe. The name “Caucasus,” is said to be derived from a Scythian word, signifying *whitened by the snow*. The length of the range is about 700 miles; the width varies from 60 to 150 miles; and the area covered by it, is about 56,000 square miles, or nearly the surface of England and Wales taken together. Some of the mountains rise to a greater height than the Alps, while the extremities of the range subside into mere hills. The highest summit is formed by the rocky

masses of the cloven-peaked Mount Elbruz, on which a tradition says that Noah's ark stopped before reaching Ararat. The mountain has a mystic, or sacred character, according to the various faiths of the neighbouring inhabitants: some tribes give it the name of Dshin-Padisshah; that is, “King of the Spirits.” It rises to about 17,000 feet above the sea, and stands quite isolated. Kasbek is the mountain which ranks next in height; and here again superstition has stepped in, to cast around it something of a mysterious character. The mountaineers relate, that the cradle of Christ is found on the Kasbek, standing above the tent of Abraham, which is itself suspended in the air. The same tradition relates, that there is a treasure which has tempted several persons, whose curiosity and avarice have always been punished by the loss of their sight. Some of the tribes regard all the mountains as deities, and pay them divine honours.

“The Caucasus,” observes a Russian writer,\* “is, in general, one of the finest countries in the world. It vies with Switzerland for the imposing majesty of its sites, and with Italy for the beauty of its climate. It no doubt will attract as many tourists as those two countries do, when war has ceased to devastate it, and safety has succeeded the alarm from which even bathers are not free, and which imposes on travellers the necessity of having an escort on the most-frequented roads.

“The emperor Nicholas, on visiting that country in 1837, exclaimed—‘I now understand better than ever the words in Genesis—‘God said, Let there be light, and there was light.’ In fact, the sun shines on the Caucasus more splendidly than it does in any other part of the Russian empire. If there be a country where men may be seized with an enthusiastic adoration of the Creator, it is undoubtedly the Caucasus; yet the indigenous worship mountains, and do not open their minds to the light of true religion. Vegetation displays there extraordinary richness and beauty. Antediluvian woods inspire you with a profound respect for the greatness of that nature. There are, in Daghestan, walnut-trees under the foliage of which two companies of soldiers may encamp; and there stands near Erivan, a plane-tree, hollow inside, offering a room, the dimensions of which is seven feet and a-half.

\* *The Caucasus*; by Ivan Golovin.



People go there to play at cards, or to take tea. The most beautiful and rare flowers enamel the meadows, and the most esteemed plants grow along the rivers. Wines and silk are the two productions of the Caucasus, which are destined to acquire the greatest importance.

"Heaths, underwoods, and plains, are filled with exquisite game, such as pheasants and red partridges. The mountaineers, who are not acquainted with small shot, and make use only of balls, are necessarily bad huntsmen, and often wonder at the nicety with which the Russians hit the game. So the vultures and eagles, that find on those high mountains a dwelling worthy of them, are, in consequence of the mountaineers being bad shots, left with ample prey. Black swans, which are erroneously believed to be found but in Australia, exist also in the Caucasus. Carnivorous beasts are there likewise rather plentiful, especially jackals and wolves. Bears are often found eating the grapes of the inhabitants, and the Cossacks cut off their paws, with which they make an excellent dish. Hyenas are met in the neighbourhood of Persia; and even tigers advance from India as far as that region. The Caspian Sea is rich in fish, especially in sturgeons and caviar. But the Kuban is the most plentiful of all rivers. Salmon trout, and ordinary trout, abound in the torrents of the mountains.

"The Caucasus offers very opposite climates. A winter of Sweden prevails on the summits, while a summer of Naples is enjoyed at Bakou. The spring is very short in Georgia, and the climate of Mingrelia is pernicious to the indigenous. While travelling, you meet, on the same day, both the beginning of vegetation on the top of the mountains, and the harvest in the valleys. The Georgians manufacture silk stuffs, which, under the name of Tarmalama, are highly valued, and are employed to make morning gowns for ladies, and dressing-gowns for rich men. The carpets, after the Oriental taste, increase also in sale in proportion as they are made of a superior quality. The richest and best-tempered arms are manufactured amongst the Circassians, and their daggers are held in high estimation."

In addition to the natural advantages thus described, the Caucasus is rich in mineral wealth. Traces of gold are found, and silver and copper mines exist near

Tiflis. Iron abounds in many places, and is worked by the natives in a rude manner. There is, probably, no country in the world, of so small an extent, which contains such a number of different nations, as the valleys of this chain of mountains. The natives speak at least seven different languages: but the Tartar is understood by most of the tribes, except the Lesghis. Strabo states, that in his time, at least seventy languages were spoken in the Caucasus. The Abhassians, who, with their numerous tribes, are in possession of the southern declivity of the range between the Black Sea and Mount Elbruz, differ from the other tribes of the Caucasus in features, and in their peaceful disposition, which has made them willingly submit to the Russians, with the exception of two tribes—the Oubikhs and the Tchigates—who form the confederation of the Chapsouks. The Abhassians were partially converted to Christianity in the time of Justinian; they are now chiefly pagans, and pay particular veneration to the oak. They are the most ancient inhabitants of the Caucasus. The northern side of the range, with its numerous valleys, is occupied by the Circassians, or Tcherkesses, among whom the tribe of Adighe holds the first rank, as being the purest in race. The Adighe are pagans, with the exception of the chiefs, who profess Islamism. Anapa is their chief town. Blood-feuds are indulged in among all the Circassian tribes, to an extent, and with a ferocity, unknown even in Corsica; families exist who have been at feud from time immemorial. The Circassians are estimated at 700,000 persons, but no certainty exists on this point. The centre of the range, on both sides of the Pass of Dariel,\* is in possession of the Ossetes, who are said to be the descendants of the Alani. The Lesghians, or Lesghis, the most powerful of the Caucasian mountaineers, occupy the greatest portion of the range east of the Pass of Dariel, and approach the peninsula of Apsheron. They are a warlike people, the terror of all their neighbours, and the most determined enemies of Russia. Their number is about 400,000. The Tchechenes inhabit the country between the lower Terek and the Kuma. They number only about 25,000, but are in a state of almost constant revolt against Russia. The extensive mountain tract bordering on the

\* A pass or road between the mountains, which takes its name from the fortress of Dariel.



north of Mount Tersh, is inhabited by the numerous tribes of the Kisti, or Misheghes. The country about the sources of the Terek, to the east of Mount Elbruz, is called Kabardah, and is subject to Russia. In the plains south of the Caucasus, live the Mingrelians, Imeritians, and Georgians. All these nations differ in their language. As great perfection of form, and an ancient origin, have been attributed to the inhabitants of this region, the highest rank in ethnological classification has been termed "the Caucasian race." Besides these aboriginal tribes, many others of foreign origin are met with in the valleys of the range. The most numerous are the Tartars. There are also Cossacks and Magyars; and on the south of the Caucasus, about Tiflis, there are several German colonies.

The range of the Caucasus forms the natural boundary, in this direction, of the vast empire of Russia. Nature herself seems here to have established a barrier against Russian acquisitiveness, and to have forbidden its advance. The Caucasus appears almost designed as a wall to arrest the advance of the hordes of the north upon Turkey and Persia, and in like manner to protect them against invasion. But the policy of the Russian cabinet takes no account of the presumed designs of Providence. It has resolved on conquest and annexation, so far as it can march its battalions and enforce its edicts. The Caucasus subdued and rendered obedient to its iron sceptre, and then Persia would lie at its feet, and Asiatic Turkey exist independently only by its forbearance. It is only by such a gradual extension of the Russian empire, that India could—if it ever could—be reached by the Russian armies; and even in that case, we more than doubt that the troops brought such distances over tracts abounding in natural obstacles, could ever be collected in such numbers as to be formidable to the British power on that vast peninsula. Moreover, no sooner would the designs of Russia in such a direction be perceived in Europe, than her trade would be arrested and her coasts insulted by a blockade of the Baltic by a British fleet. Russia is formidable to the weak; but the equivocating genius of her empire stands rebuked in the presence of the strong. The warlike Swede, and the gifted imperial general who threatened to control Europe, dashed themselves in vain into the sterile regions of Russia, and met merely

their own ruin: yet the aggressive force of that empire has been overrated. She was powerful against divided and distracted Poland; she filched Finland from Sweden in the days of its decadence; she robbed Persia of provinces too remote for it to protect; she annexed the vast and forlorn territories of Siberia, because no one disputed a prize considered worthless; and she planted her flag on a portion of the extreme north of America without opposition; but she was unable to take the Danubian provinces from the Porte, though she had arrogantly proclaimed them to be annexed to her dominions. In all aggressive measures against great powers, Russia has shown herself to be unequal to her pretensions.

This has been the case even with respect to the Caucasus, which, after many years of almost incessant warfare, she has failed to subdue. Even prior to the time of Peter the Great, Russia had intervened in the affairs of some of the nations of the Caucasus. That monarch marched against the Lesghians, and defeated them in his unsatisfactory crusade against Persia. Since that period, other Russian monarchs have taken possession of portions of the isthmus; and, as we have related, Georgia, by the consent of the people, was annexed to Russia in the early part of the reign of Alexander. At length, the treaty of Adrianople, in 1829, gave Russia a pretext for regarding the whole of the Caucasus as a province of its empire, as soon as it should be able to take possession of it. The mountaineers, animated by a passionate love of liberty, and neither understanding, nor caring to understand, how a piece of sealed parchment could make them subject to any monarch without their consent, rejected all the advances of Russia, and sternly repudiated the clauses of the convention of Adrianople. They would not surrender the political independence of their country, or enter into any treaty in which that was not regarded as a sacred and unalterable principle. On the other hand, the emperor Nicholas would not brook any opposition to his designs, and he resolved on the settlement of the question by bayonets and grapeshot.

Accordingly, in 1830, he sent General Paskiewitch—who had, in 1828, so distinguished himself in the Asiatic campaign against the Turks—to the Caucasus, and appointed him governor-general of it. He found the "pacification" of his province a



matter of extraordinary difficulty. A mountainous country scarcely admits of military operations, and races of hardy and well-armed mountaineers are proverbially difficult to subdue. An expedition, which Paskiewitch undertook to Abhasia, was sterile in results, but fertile in loss of men. After a rough experience of Caucasian warfare, he submitted a plan of operations to the imperial government. It revealed the only way which, in his opinion, and in that of his most distinguished officers, promised ultimately, though at a great expense of blood and treasure, to bring about the tranquillisation of the Caucasus. It consisted in confining the refractory mountaineers within an encircling and intersecting chain of forts, which would require to be garrisoned by not less than 80,000 men. The chief points of this plan, as adopted by the military council of St. Petersburg, were as follows:—First, premising that forts were to be erected along the Black Sea line of coast to complete the encircling chain of Russian posts, the marshal proposed that four new military routes across the mountains should be constructed, and planted throughout with fortresses. One road was to run from Gelendshik on the Black Sea, south of Anapa, through the mountains to the lower Kuban; one from a still more southerly point on the Black Sea shore, through and over the mountain range to the Russian forts on the north, in the vicinity of Elbruz; another from Nucha to the east of Georgia, over the Lesghian chain, to the country of the Tchetchentzes; and the fourth and last, from a point eastward of Nucha, over the same Lesghian chain, to the fortress of Derbend on the Caspian. Other details referred to the securing and facilitating the intercommunication of the Russian lines and fortresses.

Marshal Paskiewitch did not remain to carry his elaborate scheme into execution, as, in 1831, he was recalled to take the command in the war against the Poles, as we have already related. General Williamoff succeeded Paskiewitch as governor in the Caucasus. In a proclamation addressed to the Circassians, inviting them to submit, he, in order to give that people an idea of the power of the czar, arrogantly observed—"If heaven were to fall, it would be supported by Russian bayonets." He soon, however, experienced the effects of the bravery and wild independence of the mountaineers. In his advance with 20,000

men from the Kuban, across the mountains towards Gelendshik, on the coast of the Black Sea, to carry out the first of the routes proposed by Paskiewitch, his troops fell into an ambush of the Circassians, and were subjected to such a tempest of rifle-fire from every ledge of rock or other point that commanded the line of march, that the attempt was not only baffled, but cost him between three and four thousand men in killed, wounded, and prisoners.

This was but a small matter to the Russian government, which continually sent reinforcements to the Caucasus, with the hope of overawing the mountaineers into submission. Three of the contemplated forts were erected on the route from the Kuban to Gelendshik, and others were erected on the western shore of the Caucasus, with the object of increasing the efficiency of a blockade established there. This blockade, though but imperfectly preserved, was more oppressive to the Circassians than the presence of large bodies of Russian troops. It rendered it difficult for the mountaineers to obtain supplies of gunpowder, and threatened to ruin the trade they carried on in their daughters by sending them for sale to Constantinople. With respect to this practice the Circassians are little better than savages; but as it is the custom amongst them for fathers to sell their daughters for the purposes of prostitution, they appear to be unconscious of the shame and heartlessness of such proceedings. Russia is indifferent on this point; and perhaps she does wisely in not interfering with the social practices, or mispractices, of a people whom she desires to win to submission to her sway. "The slave-trade," observes Golovin, in allusion to the poor girls who are converted into articles of commerce, "was sanctioned by a treaty of 1847, between the Russians and the Circassians. During part of the year it is carried on openly on the Black Sea. Every year more than 1,000 young girls are carried from Circassia to Turkey; and the obstacles opposed to that trade have had no other result than to quadruple the price of slaves. Even Austrian steam-boats are employed for carrying Circassian girls; and whenever the Russians capture any of these slave-boats, they either give the girls in marriage to the Cossacks, or they allow them to be violated by the soldiers of the regiments garrisoned in the neighbouring forts."

The Circassian chiefs, oppressed by the



Russian blockade of their coast, and startled by the reports in circulation as to the enormous forces Russia was about to pour out for their subjugation, looked for assistance to the other European states, and especially to England, of whose power and supposed sympathy with the oppressed, they entertained rather extravagant notions. These impressions were strengthened by the language of several enthusiastic English travellers, whom the simple mountaineers regarded as ambassadors from this country. A curious circumstance also occurred at this time (in 1837), by which the English government ran some risk of taking the cause of the Circassians upon its shoulders, without exactly intending to do so. An impression prevailed in this country, and was actively disseminated by a portion of the press, that neither the treaty of Adrianople, nor any other treaty, gave Russia the *right* of establishing a blockade of the Circassian coast. This view of the matter was so confidently held by a Mr. James Stanislaus Bell, that he resolved on putting it to a public test by a deliberate and ostentatious defiance of the Russian blockade. He proceeded to the Caucasus in the *Vixen*, an English merchant vessel, which he had loaded with munitions of war for disposal among the mountaineers. Before the vessel sailed, Mr. Bell addressed a letter to Viscount Palmerston, then foreign secretary, to inquire whether the Russian blockade in the Black Sea was recognised by the English government. In reply, he was informed that "no blockade was recognised by Great Britain, a notification of which had not been published in the *London Gazette*." As no such notification had been given, Mr. Bell set sail in the *Vixen*; and trusted that either one of two supposed results must follow from the execution of his daring scheme. He trusted that the blockading force would seize the *Vixen*, and thus induce the British government to send a fleet to the Black Sea to avenge the outrage by destroying the Russian armament and arsenals there; or that if his vessel successfully set the blockade at defiance, its illegality or its impotence would become notorious, and the Circassians be well supplied for the future with powder and weapons.

Neither of these results occurred; for, though the *Vixen* was seized while attempting to land her contraband cargo, the British fleet in the Mediterranean did not take any notice of a proceeding concerning

which it was both ignorant and unauthorised to act in the event of its being informed. News of the seizure first reached this country through the medium of the *St. Petersburg Gazette*, in which the narrative was accompanied by an anxious vindication of the legality of the act, and a statement, that in consequence of the emperor's high respect for the flag (the privileges of which the captain of the *Vixen* had so grossly attempted to abuse), the officers and crew, and the ship herself, had been liberated, and only the war material she contained confiscated. A considerable sensation was produced in this country, and warm discussions took place in parliament. In answer to a question from Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston went so far as to declare, that the question of peace or war with Russia entirely depended upon the opinion that might be given by the law-officers of the crown, to whom the whole case had been formally submitted, as to the right of Russia to institute the blockade. Their decision was in favour of the Russian government, and the affair blew over; but not without the expenditure of a great deal of abuse against Lord Palmerston for what was termed "base truckling" to the czar; a reproach which, in this instance at least, we cannot conceive he merited.

In the course of the same year (1837), the emperor Nicholas paid a visit to the Caucasus; but he quite failed in producing that impression on the Circassian chiefs which he trusted his presence would effect. He travelled with great rapidity, but remained at Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, from the 20th to the 24th of October; during which time he reviewed the Russian troops, gave dinners and a grand ball, and invited the chiefs of the country to various conferences, to which they repaired on the faith of the Russian parole. This language, instead of conciliating these proud mountaineers, only had the effect of irritating them. He was at that time disfigured by an eruption in the face, which took much from the majesty of his personal appearance; and when, to give them a rude conception of his power, he told them that he had sufficient powder to blow up all their mountains, they did not form a high opinion of his intellect.

Hitherto a series of desultory conflicts only had taken place between the Circassians and the Russians; but in 1839, the latter made a formal declaration of war,



and hostilities have continued, with but little intermission, ever since. During that year, three Russian armies were landed on the Circassian shore, and an active campaign followed. It was, for the most part, a disastrous one for the Russians, who, during it, had seventeen ships of war driven on shore or foundered in the Black Sea. So resolute, also, was the conduct of the Circassians, and so fatal were the effects of their constant ambushes and unexpected attacks, that General Golovin, who had succeeded to the command, attempted to win by negotiation what he was unable to obtain by arms. In an address to the mountaineers, he told them—"The most mighty of all earthly potentates and great monarchs, the emperor, condescended to visit the Caucasus; and in his unbounded clemency, his imperial majesty deigned personally to inform himself, from the deputies of the different nations, of circumstances respecting the position and the wants of the tribes which they represented; and in this manner, having learned that the previous conditions were too onerous, the magnanimous monarch has changed them for the gracious conditions upon which, in future, the submission of the mountaineers will be accepted—namely, 'Cease from all hostilities against us; give the hostages we shall name; and surrender all the deserters and all the prisoners you have taken.'" The address also contained some bitter remarks upon the English, from whom the Circassians yet confidently expected assistance. The Circassians were not more readily ensnared by Russian promises, than they were to be defeated by Russian arms; and they replied—"We know you well; you are men without faith, without honour, without religion; and we would as soon place confidence in the pigs which roam our forests, and which we esteem just as much as we do so many Muscovites. Thank God, we know our friends from our enemies, and are not to be so grossly imposed upon as you imagine. You will next assert, that the steamers and other ships, whose wrecks bestrew our coast, were not Russian. Spare us your assurances; proceed with your war, and do your worst!"

The war was accordingly renewed in 1840; but the Russians experienced even still more serious reverses. Most of the new forts they had erected on the coast were taken and demolished by the Circassians. The line of forts, from the Kuban

to Gelendshik, was swept away, and the garrisons dispersed or massacred. A great prophet-leader, a devout Mussulman, also arose on the eastern side of the mountains; and the Russians were fain to conclude a truce with the Circassians, that they might recover from their losses, and prepare to turn their arms against this new foe.

Schamyl, the pupil and successor of Kasi Mullah, was the patriot and presumed prophet who had arisen on the eastern side of the Caucasus. Brave, eloquent, devout, enthusiastic, and convinced that his actions were the result of direct inspirations from God, Schamyl was just the chieftain required for so hardy and bold a race as the inhabitants of this wild region. He would not permit any of the neighbouring tribes to submit to the Russians; but compelled those who were inclined to do so, to take up their rifles in defence of their fatherland. "If," said he to some who hesitated, "ye continue to give more belief to the deceitful words of the infidels than ye do to my speech, I will do that which Kasi Mullah formerly had it in his mind to do. My bands will overwhelm your villages like a storm-cloud, to compel that which you deny to my friendly assurances. I will come with bloody footsteps; desolation and fear shall follow and precede my hosts; for what the might of eloquence may not do, shall be effected with the edge of the sword." His words produced this response:—"Mohammed was Allah's first prophet; Schamyl is his second!" But the inhabitants of Kabardah fearing Russia more than the warrior-prophet, he kept his word, and burnt more than sixty of their villages.

General Grabbe was sent with 12,000 veteran troops against Akhoulgo, the stronghold of Schamyl—a kind of castle, shut up on every side by masses of rock, and fortified with the resources of modern art; a labour in which he had been assisted by foreigners. Akhoulgo was taken by Grabbe at a terrible cost of life; a murderous battle, of a desultory kind, being fought, which extended over five days. Schamyl escaped with his life only by a stratagem; and so imminent was his danger, that the mountaineers more than ever believed him to be under the especial protection of heaven. His fame was undiminished; and for three or four years he carried on an incessant and merciless guerilla warfare against the Russian forces. Such was the rapidity of his movements, and so unex-



pectedly did he and his fierce followers burst upon their foes, that the latter feared that he possessed the power of ubiquity. At length General Grabbe, at the head of a body of 20,000 men, pursued him to a retreat in the mountains called Dargo, with the hope of capturing or destroying so dangerous a chief. The mountaineers retired before their foes, and lured them on through deserted valleys and rugged mountain-passes, until they were completely exhausted through fatigue and hardship. Nothing was left for them but to retrace their weary steps; which they no sooner did, than the followers of Schamyl rushed upon them with tremendous impetuosity, and assailed them at every difficult spot on their march. Having captured a Russian drummer, the troops of Schamyl compelled him to beat the drum; and many Russian soldiers, attracted by the sound, fell into the snare. Discipline was forgotten during the retreat; and more than half the officers were killed. When General Grabbe regained the encampment, he had lost a fourth part of his army, several cannon, a quantity of baggage, and other material of war. The emperor, vexed at this result, recalled him; at the same time acknowledging that the rout was more attributable to the country and the elements than to the commanding officer. He was replaced by General Neidhart who, not proving more fortunate than his predecessor, and being unable to arrest the ravages of Schamyl, was also recalled; and, unable to bear his disgrace, died of grief.

Count Woronzoff was then sent from St. Petersburg to assume the chief command in the Caucasus, and the troops there were raised to the number of 150,000 men. The emperor reserved to himself the right of giving orders, and commanded everything to be sacrificed for the purpose of taking Dargo. Woronzoff undertook an expedition against it; and Schamyl, unable to defend a place of no strategical importance, allowed it to be taken; but while the army was retiring, he attacked it so successfully in the forest of Itcherki, that the Russian force was nearly destroyed. It would have been totally so, but that two Circassian prisoners, who turned traitors to their country, succeeded in carrying to General Freytag an order to

come to the help of his chief. The mountaineers, perched on fragments of inaccessible rocks, shot down the Russian officers almost with impunity, and every step of the retreat was disputed with a ferocious obstinacy. Barricades, formed of trunks of trees, fragments of rock, and double rows of strong stakes, had been thrown across the narrow passes; and at each of these positions, which were commanded by Schamyl's marksmen, the carnage was terrible. Such was the terror created by these incessant assaults, that a panic arose in the Russian ranks; and when the foe burst upon them, they offered but little resistance, but, falling into disorder, broke and fled, and were pursued and cut down for miles. In this terrible rout the Russians lost 4,000 men; and more than 200 officers, including three generals, were among the slain. Russia has since chiefly occupied herself with retaining her position in the Caucasus, and acting on the defensive. Schamyl has not ceased to be a terror to the invaders; and it is supposed that he has recently devoted himself towards bringing about a federal defensive union between all the tribes of the Caucasus; an event which, if effected, would render Russian conquest very remote, if not altogether impossible. Hitherto, it is certain that Russia has sustained a defeat, or rather series of defeats, though she will not acknowledge that such is the fact.

The spirit of the mountaineers was re-animated by the war of 1854-'5; and Sultan Abdul-Medjid, perceiving the fault of his predecessors (who had determined the fate of the Circassians by ceding to the Russians the coast of the Black Sea without the consent of the former), concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Schamyl; which, however, did not lead to any important result.

"When is, then, an end to be put to the war? The *avouls* (villages) just subdued rebel as soon as the Russians have withdrawn, or the Murids come there. Peace, say the Russian military men, cannot be obtained *unless all the inhabitants are slaughtered*. That measure has always been rejected by the Russian government,\* which plumes itself on its humanity, but which shows so little concern for the chronic effusion of blood caused by this protracted

\* For the conclusive reason, that it has shown itself unable to put it into execution; besides, the Russians do not want a desert which they have not

the means of populating: they desire to make the Caucasus a Russian province, and the Caucasians Russian serfs.



war. There might be colonisation, it is true; but the population of Russia is not sufficiently numerous to colonise the Caucasus; besides, the inhabitants of the plain are not willing to leave their fertile fields to go and cultivate rocks in the mountains. The Russian forts are too isolated to afford timely assistance to one which is threatened; while the Circassians, by uniting forces superior to those of the garrisons, will have more chance of attacking them successively in detail, when they have improved in the art of carrying on a siege, or have artillery at their service. In the meantime, they

undertake sanguinary irruptions among the Russian colonists, execute *razzias*, carry away the cattle, and sometimes the wives, of the Cossacks—a thing which does not occur in the war of Algiers. Moreover, the Russian forts, though very numerous, have been found to be insufficient. The system of forts was abandoned in Africa by General Bugeau, and replaced with advantage by mobile columns. It is true, that movements are more difficult in the Caucasus than in Africa; and the Russians have still a great deal to learn from the French in the art of war.”\*

#### CHAPTER LIX.

FAILURE OF A RUSSIAN EXPEDITION AGAINST KHIVA; THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS VISITS ENGLAND, AND BECOMES THE GUEST OF QUEEN VICTORIA; HE TRANSMITS A MEMORANDUM ON THE AFFAIRS OF TURKEY TO THE ENGLISH CABINET; OPINION OF NICHOLAS ON THE ENGLISH FORM OF GOVERNMENT; SUPPRESSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CRACOW; FUTILE EXPOSTULATIONS OF THE CABINETS OF LONDON AND PARIS; DICTATORIAL ATTITUDE OF AUSTRIA AND RUSSIA TOWARDS SWITZERLAND; THE HUNGARIAN REVOLUTION; MILITARY INTERVENTION OF RUSSIA, AND SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLUTION; TRIUMPHANT MANIFESTO OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS, WHO ASSUMES TO BE THE PROTECTOR OF THE CONTINENTAL DESPOTISMS AGAINST ANY INSURRECTIONARY MOVEMENTS OF THEIR SUBJECTS.

THE irritation which existed in this country against Russia, on account of the seizure of the British merchantman, the *Vixen*, on the Circassian shore of the Black Sea, was much increased by the march, in 1838, of a Persian army, directed by Russian officers, against Herat. This proceeding was regarded, both by the government and people of this country, as a preliminary to the invasion of the Anglo-Indian empire; and a rupture of amicable relations between Great Britain and Russia appeared extremely probable. Fortunately the apprehensions of the English cabinet were tranquillised by the repulse of the Persians, and the subsequent conquest of Afghanistan by an army from India.

Russian acquisitiveness in this direction received a further check from the failure of a formidable expedition sent by the czar, in 1840, against the predatory state of Khiva—an Asiatic country, forming a part of that natural division which goes by the name of Turan, or Turkestan. The inhabitants of Khiva consist of the Uzbecks and the Sartes; the former being a branch of the

Turks, and the latter Persians. The authority of the khan of Khiva is supposed to extend over a country containing about 150,000 square miles. Russia has frequently been accused of attempting to extend her frontier in this direction; but apparently insurmountable obstacles stand in the way of the accomplishment of her desire. Between the Russian town of Orenburg and the territory of Khiva, lie 400 miles of salt desert. The Russian general, though provided with 10,000 baggage camels, was unable even to reach Khiva. So terrible were the hardships encountered by his troops, that on reaching the last Russian outpost, they were compelled to retrace their steps. The expedition had been undertaken during the winter, merely that the troops might be enabled to obtain fresh water, which is dried up by the parching heats of the summer. The consequence was, the men suffered terribly from the cold, which was 40° below zero of the centigrade thermometer. Thus it will be seen, that from whatever point Russia endeavours to advance upon India,

\* *The Caucasus*; by Ivan Golovin.



she will meet the stern, unbending opposition of nature.

These matters passed over without disturbing the peaceful relations between Russia and England, which it was the interest of both countries to maintain. In the June of the year 1844, the emperor Nicholas visited England. He arrived off Woolwich on the 1st of June, in the *Cyclops*, a Dutch government steamer, attended by Count Orloff, General d'Adlerberg, Prince Wassiltschikoff, and Prince Radzitvil. On landing, the distinguished visitors at once proceeded to the Russian embassy, where they took up their abode. On the following day, Prince Albert arrived, and escorted the emperor and the principal persons of his suite to Buckingham Palace. The emperor was received by her majesty in the grand hall, where a splendid *déjeuner* was served. Nicholas afterwards visited the Queen-dowager, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, the Duchess of Gloucester, the Princess Sophia, and the Duke of Wellington. The second day of his stay he visited Sir Robert Peel, and purchased £5,000 worth of jewellery at Messrs. Mortimer's and Hunt's. Her majesty and her distinguished visitors, including the king of Saxony, then proceeded to Windsor by the Great Western railway. For eight days Nicholas was entertained by her majesty, during which period he went to Ascot races; was present at a grand review in the Great Park at Windsor; inspected Prince Albert's farm; went to see the Virginia Water; returned to town, and paid an almost innumerable amount of visits to distinguished people; besides inspecting the United Service Club, the new houses of parliament, and attending a *fête* given by the Duke of Devonshire at Chiswick, at which seven or eight hundred distinguished noblemen and gentlemen were present. On returning to Woolwich, he visited the dockyard and the works, and then embarked on board the *Black Eagle* steamer on his return home.

During the stay of the czar, he had some interviews with the ministers of her majesty on the vexed subject of the Eastern question. The observations of Nicholas on this topic were embodied, by his direction, in a memorandum, which was forwarded to the English cabinet by Count Nesselrode, and confided to Lord Aberdeen, then minister for foreign affairs. That memorandum throws some light upon the events which led to the great war of 1854-'5, and shows

both how the mind of the emperor dwelt constantly on the enfeebled state of Turkey, and the profound duplicity with which he masked his views. Read by the light afforded by later events, it will be seen that Nicholas desired to establish a close relationship with England, and then to use her naval power to assist in his sinister designs on the Ottoman territory. As he observed upon another occasion—"All I want is a good understanding with England. This point arrived at, the English government and I—I and the English government—having entire confidence in one another's views, I care nothing about the rest." We append the imperial memorandum, as a valuable historical document.

"Russia and England are mutually penetrated with the conviction that it is for their common interest that the Ottoman Porte should maintain itself in the state of independence and of territorial possession which at present constitute that empire, as that political combination is the one which is most compatible with the general interest of the maintenance of peace. Being agreed on this principle, Russia and England have an equal interest in uniting their efforts in order to keep up the existence of the Ottoman empire, and to avert all the dangers which can place in jeopardy its safety. With this object, the essential point is to suffer the Porte to live in repose, without needlessly disturbing it by diplomatic bickerings, and without interfering, unless with absolute necessity, in its internal affairs. In order to carry out skilfully this system of forbearance, with a view to the well-understood interest of the Porte, two things must not be lost sight of. They are these :—

"In the first place, the Porte has a constant tendency to extricate itself from the engagements imposed upon it by the treaties which it has concluded with other powers. It hopes to do so with impunity, because it reckons on the mutual jealousy of the cabinets. It thinks that if it fails in its engagements towards one of them, the rest will espouse its quarrel, and will screen it from all responsibility. It is essential not to confirm the Porte in this delusion. Every time that it fails in its obligations towards one of the great powers, it is the interest of all the rest to make it sensible of its error, and seriously to exhort it to act rightly towards the cabinet which demands just reparation. As soon as the



Porte shall perceive that it is not supported by the other cabinets, it will give way, and the differences which have arisen will be arranged in a conciliatory manner, without any conflict resulting from them.

"There is a second cause of complication which is inherent in the situation of the Porte; it is the difficulty which exists in reconciling the respect due to the sovereign authority of the sultan, founded on the Mussulman law, with the forbearance required by the interests of the Christian population of that empire. This difficulty is real. In the present state of feeling in Europe, the cabinets cannot see with indifference the Christian populations in Turkey exposed to flagrant acts of oppression and intolerance. It is necessary constantly to make the Ottoman ministers sensible of this truth, and to persuade them that they can only reckon on the friendship and on the support of the great powers on the condition that they treat the Christian subjects of the Porte with toleration and with mildness. While insisting on this truth, it will be the duty of the foreign representatives, on the other hand, to exert all their influence to maintain the Christian subjects of the Porte in submission to the sovereign authority. It will be the duty of the foreign representatives, guided by these principles, to act among themselves in a perfect spirit of agreement. If they address remonstrances to the Porte, those remonstrances must bear a real character of unanimity, though divested of one of exclusive dictation. By persevering in this system with calmness and moderation, the representatives of the great cabinets of Europe will have the best chance of succeeding in the steps which they may take, without giving occasion for complications which might affect the tranquillity of the Ottoman empire. If all the great powers frankly adopt this line of conduct, they will have a well-founded expectation of preserving the existence of Turkey. However, they must not conceal from themselves how many elements of dissolution that empire contains within itself. Unforeseen circumstances may hasten its fall, without its being in the power of the friendly cabinets to prevent it. As it is not given to human foresight to settle beforehand a plan of action for such or such unlooked-for case, it would be premature to discuss eventualities which may never be realised. In the uncertainty which hovers

over the future, a single fundamental idea seems to admit of a really practical application; it is that the danger which may result from a catastrophe in Turkey, will be much diminished if, in the event of its occurring, Russia and England have come to an understanding as to the course to be taken by them in common.

"That understanding will be the more beneficial, inasmuch as it will have the full assent of Austria. Between her and Russia there exists already an entire conformity of principles in regard to the affairs of Turkey, in a common interest of conservatism and of peace. In order to render their union more efficacious, there would remain nothing to be desired but that England should be seen to associate herself thereto with the same view. The reason which recommends the establishment of this agreement is very simple. On land Russia exercises in regard to Turkey a preponderant action. On sea England occupies the same position. Isolated, the action of these two powers might do much mischief. United, it can produce a real benefit; thence the advantage of coming to a previous understanding before having recourse to action.

"This notion was in principle agreed upon during the emperor's last residence in London. The result was the eventual engagement, that if anything unforeseen occurred in Turkey, Russia and England should previously concert together as to the course which they should pursue in common. The object for which Russia and England will have to come to an understanding may be expressed in the following manner:—

"1. To seek to maintain the existence of the Ottoman empire in its present state so long as that political combination shall be possible.

"2. If we foresee that it must crumble to pieces, to enter into previous concert as to everything relating to the establishment of a new order of things, intended to replace that which now exists, and, in conjunction with each other, to see that the change which may have occurred in the internal situation of that empire shall not injuriously affect either the security of their own states and the rights which the treaties assure to them respectively, or the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe.

"For the purpose thus stated, the policy



of Russia and of Austria, as we have already said, is closely united by the principle of perfect identity. If England, as the principal maritime power, acts in concert with them, it is to be supposed that France will find herself obliged to act in conformity with the course agreed upon between St. Petersburg, London, and Vienna. Conflict between the great powers being thus obviated, it is to be hoped that the peace of Europe will be maintained even in the midst of such serious circumstances. It is to secure this object of common interest, if the case occurs, that, as the emperor agreed with her Britannic majesty's ministers during his residence in England, the previous understanding which Russia and England shall establish between themselves must be directed."

However amicable might be the feelings of the emperor Nicholas towards England and its fair sovereign, it is certain that he viewed the form of government existing in this country with extreme aversion. The Marquis Custine records an interesting conversation he had with the emperor, in which the latter expressed his opinion concerning the English and other forms of government. We quote it as throwing some light on the intellectual character of Nicholas.

"'I can truly say, sire, that one of the chief motives of my curiosity in visiting Russia, was the desire of approaching a prince who exercises such power over men.'—'The Russians are amiable, but he must render himself worthy who would govern such a people.'—'Your majesty has better appreciated the wants and the position of this country than any of your predecessors.'—'Despotism still exists in Russia: *it is the essence of my government*; but it accords with the genius of the nation.'—'Sire, by stopping Russia on the road of imitation, you are restoring her to herself.'—'I love my country, and I believe I understand it. I assure you, that when I feel heartily weary of all the miseries of the times, I endeavour to forget the rest of Europe by retiring towards the interior of Russia.'—'In order to refresh yourself at your fountain-head.'—'Precisely so. No one is more from his heart a Russian than I am. I am going to say to you what I would not say to another; but I feel that you will comprehend me.'

"Here the emperor interrupted himself, and looked at me attentively. I continued

to listen without replying, and he proceeded—'I can understand republicanism; it is a plain and straightforward form of government, or, at least, it might be so; I can understand absolute monarchy, for I am myself the head of such an order of things; *but I cannot understand a representative monarchy: it is the government of lies, fraud, and corruption*; and I would rather fall back even upon China than ever adopt it.'—'Sire, I have always regarded representative government as a compact inevitable in certain communities at certain epochs; but, like all other compacts, it does not solve questions—it only adjourns difficulties.'

"The emperor seemed to say, 'Go on.' I continued—'It is a truce signed between democracy and monarchy, under the auspices of two very mean tyrants, fear and interest; and it is prolonged by that pride of intellect which takes pleasure in talking, and that popular vanity which satisfies itself on words. In short, it is the aristocracy of oratory, substituted for the aristocracy of birth; it is the government of the lawyer.'—'Sir, you speak the truth,' said the emperor, pressing my hand; 'I have been a representative sovereign,\* and the world knows what it has cost me to have been unwilling to submit to the exigencies of this infamous government. To buy votes, to corrupt consciences, to seduce some in order to deceive others; all these means I disdained, as degrading those who obey as much as those who command, and I have dearly paid the penalty of my straightforwardness; but, God be praised, I have done for ever with this detestable political machine. I shall never more be a constitutional king. I have too much need of saying all that I think ever to consent to reign over any people by means of strata-gem and intrigue.'"

Russia never lost sight of her policy to extend her influence both throughout Europe and Asia. At this period she was actively but secretly employed in consolidating her power, fortifying her ports, and strengthening her frontier fortresses. She also assumed to be the protectress of the continental monarchies against any effort for constitutional government made by their subjects. Alexander had dreaded revolutionary principles; but Nicholas made it the labour of his life to crush and utterly extirpate them. He converted St. Peters-

\* In Poland.



burg into the head-quarters of despotism, and endeavoured to propagandise in its behalf by means of intimidation.

The little state of Cracow had been formed, by the treaties of 1815, into a free republic, under the sanction of all the allied powers. In the February of 1846, a feeble and foolish attempt at revolution, for the purpose of establishing a kind of socialistic communism in conjunction with Polish independence, broke out at Cracow. A provisional government was formed, and a manifesto of its principles published. "Let us endeavour," said this document, "to establish a community in which every man will enjoy the fruits of the earth according to his deserts and capacity; let all privileges cease; let those who are inferior in birth, intelligence, or physical strength, obtain, without humiliation, the unfailing assistance of communism, which will divide among all the absolute proprietorship of the soil, now enjoyed by a small minority. Let all imposts, whether paid in labour or in money, cease; and let all who have fought for their country have an indemnity in land taken from the national property."

This imprudent language was not unnaturally regarded as a proclamation of war against property, and the peasants of Galicia proceeded to outrages against the neighbouring nobility, whom they had long detested. The troops of Austria, Russia, and Prussia successively entered Cracow, and the revolutionary movement was speedily suppressed. In the following November, a joint decree of Russia, Austria, and Prussia revoked and annulled the articles of the treaty, and Cracow was made over to Austria! This arbitrary conduct elicited expostulations from the cabinets of London and Paris, both of which, as parties to the treaty of 1815, had guaranteed the independence of the little republic. Lord Palmerston observed—"I have too high an opinion of the sentiments which must animate the three powers, to doubt of their acting towards Cracow in any other spirit than that of the treaty of Vienna. Those governments are too intelligent not to perceive that the treaty of Vienna must be considered in its integrity, and that no government is permitted to make a choice of those articles which it may wish to preserve or violate. I must add, that if there are any powers who have signed the treaty of Vienna who are specially interested in its faithful execution, they are the German

powers; and I am sure that it cannot have escaped the perspicacity of those powers, that if the treaty of Vienna is not good on the Vistula, it must be equally bad on the Rhine and the Po." M. Guizot also, in the name of France, forwarded his protest to Vienna against the incorporation of Cracow with the Austrian empire. "Nothing," he observed, "more compromises a government than an avowal of its inability to fulfil, even slowly, its own promises, and the hopes which it has excited. The destruction of the small state of Cracow may deprive Polish conspirators and insurgents of some means of action, but it must also foster and irritate the feelings in which these deplorable enterprises have so frequently and so obstinately originated, and, moreover, weaken the influences by which they might be prevented. It enfeebles, throughout Europe, the principles of order and conservatism, and strengthens blind passions and violent designs." These expostulations were unavailing, for Austria defended its seizure of Cracow by the assertion that that state had, by its conduct since 1815, and especially in the recent outbreak, itself violated the conditions on which its independence was promised. The formal annexation of Cracow to Austria extinguished the last spark of Polish independence.

In the following year (1847), another instance occurred of the dictatorial attitude which Russia had assumed with regard to the lesser powers of Europe. Russia, in conjunction with the governments of Austria and Prussia, addressed a note to Switzerland, stating that they abstained from intervention only on condition of the Swiss adhering to the compact of 1815 (which the three despotic powers had themselves just violated with respect to Cracow), and not altering, or in any way liberalising, their domestic institutions. The Swiss government, animated by a noble spirit of independence, protested against any foreign interference, and proceeded in its own course. The three repressive governments appear to have thought better of the matter; for the only measures taken were by Austria, which imposed some vexatious restrictions on the commerce and intercourse of the Swiss.

The year 1848 was a memorable one in Europe; it was a year of fierce political excitement—a year of revolutions; and the ancient despotisms of the continent seemed



about to crumble into ruin. The Russian government, however, stood firm; for, notwithstanding the severe despotism which constitutes its vital principle, its people, or rather subjects, remained passive from their ignorance and apathetic habits of submission. The flight of Louis Philippe, the overturning of the throne of France, and the establishment of a republic in that country, led other nations to an attempt to shake off their political servitude, and inaugurated a series of insurrections.

Austria was the most severely shaken of the continental powers, and brought, indeed, almost to the verge of dissolution as an empire. Soon after the expulsion of Louis Philippe from Paris, revolutionary movements broke out in Lombardy and Venice, in Hungary, and even in Austria Proper. In the March of 1848, Vienna, excited by a few students and Poles, had risen in insurrection; Prince Metternich fled, and a free constitution was prepared and accepted by the emperor Ferdinand, who shortly afterwards withdrew from the capital, and retired to Innsprück.

But the most formidable movement against the Austrian government was that which took place in Hungary. To escape the tyranny of the Turks, the Hungarians submitted to the domination of Austria, the emperor of which (Ferdinand I.) became their king, his claim to that dignity being based on the fact of his having married, in 1521, Anna, daughter of Ladislaus VI., king of Bohemia and Hungary, and sister of Louis, who, having succeeded his father in the crown of those realms, was killed in the disastrous battle of Mohaz by the Turks, in 1526, and left no issue. A native historian of the Hungarian "War of Liberation"\* (as the revolution of 1848 was called), observes—"Ferdinand I. was most unmindful of his promises. So unconscientiously did he neglect the administration of Hungary, that nine years after his coronation, the estates of the nation, assembled in parliament at Presburg, found it necessary to draw up a long list of their grievances. This remonstrance sets forth that the king's absence from the country is the prime cause of all the evils they complain of. Hence the irruptions of the Turks; hence the atrocious cruelties practised by petty tyrants within the confines of the country. Hence, too, the insufferable ex-

tortions of all the king's foreign captains, who, instead of protecting the country, drained it to ruin, and betrayed it to the hands of its enemies.

"For three hundred years this Austrian system remained faithful to its original evil principles. And though at intervals—for such there were, though few and far between—a more legal and enlightened administration seemed to prevail, still the cabinet of Vienna returned to its fatal endeavours to oppress and colonise Hungary.

"The kings of the time, before the advent of the Hapsburg race, had for two centuries battled against the Turks, gallantly and often victoriously; and though under the reign of the last two kings of this period the power of Hungary seemed to decline, and though various provinces seceded from the kingdom, still the great territories of Hungary, Croatia, and Transylvania remained intact; and the house of Hapsburg, upon its advent, obtained a free and uncurtailed possession of a great and beautiful empire.

"But scarcely had Ferdinand I. received the crown of Hungary for himself and his family, when he, and his descendants after him, neglected the country and the sacred duties of their office. They all pledged their words to reside in Hungary for a part of the year; but not one of them remained true to his word. Whenever the Hungarian nation expressed their wishes in this respect, they received evasive answers, based on the most futile pretences. The command of the Hungarian troops was given to foreigners, to the signal detriment of the native generals, who were better versed in the ways and means of warfare against the Turks than the Austrian officers could be. When the house of Austria was a suitor for the Hungarian crown, great stress was laid on its hereditary power and the imperial dignity of its members, as giving a promise of an efficient protection against the Turks. But their reign in Hungary was a direct contradiction of their promises. Large provinces were left to the Turks. For one hundred and forty-five years did the Crescent rule over more than one-half of the country. The chiefs of the malcontents, in 1667, were fully justified in protesting, that 'It was an open question: which was worse—Turkish or Austrian sovereignty? The Black Sea and the Adriatic were at one time the confines of the kingdom of Hungary. Ever since the advent of the first

\* *Memoirs of the War of Independence in Hungary*: by General Klapka.



Hapsburg our power has decreased, and our frontiers receded; one hundred and forty years have sufficed to make Hungary a narrow strip of land, near the Carpathian and the Styrian mountains. The Danube, the Theiss, the Drave, and the Save, flow for the benefit of the Turks; three-fourths of Hungary, viz., the provinces of Transylvania, Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Servia, and Bosnia, are tributaries to them, if not subjects. It is better to make a voluntary surrender to the Porte, and to have liberty of conscience, such as Transylvania enjoys.'

"The successful encroachments of the Turks were chiefly owing to the want of skill of the foreign generals, to the venality of the foreign commanders in our fortresses, to the cowardice of foreign hirelings, to the dilatory measures of the Vienna Hof Kriegs-rath, and to treaties of peace which were concluded without the advice and consent of the Hungarian parliaments. When the country was reconquered, the Hungarians took the post of danger in all battles and assaults. They monopolised the danger and the victory. The estates of the country were lavish in their votes of money (large though the king's income was); and no less than 100,000,000 of florins were granted as 'special subsidies' in the period from 1683 to 1706. Still, when in 1699 the peace of Karlowitz was concluded, no reference was made to the palatine or the estates of the country. In that treaty of peace, King Leopold is spoken of as 'his *imperial* majesty,' and any allusion to his *royal* dignity carefully avoided. This is but one trait among a hundred."

This extract will tend to show the feeling existing among the Hungarians towards their Austrian rulers: but the great source of irritation lay in the fact, that the Austrian government endeavoured to extinguish the Hungarian nationality; to make that country merely an Austrian province; to rule it as though it had been a conquered territory; and gradually to supplant and extirpate the ancient Magyar race. Such a mode of government, or rather *mis*-government, almost invariably leads to insurrectionary reaction, and may be termed the nurse of revolution. With so spirited and intensely national a people as the Hungarians, such a result was inevitable. For some years, a powerful national party had been organised, and an active opposition maintained in the Diet; while patriotic feelings had, by every possible means, been

excited throughout the country. The Austrian government had in vain endeavoured to repress the movement; and the Diet of 1847-'8 opened with more than the usual hope and energy. Louis Kossuth, the recognised leader of the more advanced liberals, had been returned as representative of the county of Pesth. On the 3rd of March, 1848, the Diet adopted a proposition made by him to send a deputation to their king (the emperor), for the purpose of requiring the formation of a new ministry, essentially Hungarian, as well as certain constitutional reforms. On the 15th of the same month, Kossuth entered Vienna—then in a state of insurrection—with the deputation, and was welcomed by the people with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of applause and sympathy. The deputation was received by the emperor, who yielded to most of its requirements. An Hungarian ministry was formed, of which Count Louis Batthyany became the president, and Kossuth the minister of finance. Various liberal measures passed the Diet, and received the royal assent. They formed Hungary and Transylvania into one kingdom; established an annual Diet, indissoluble by the king; largely extended the suffrage; created a national guard; abolished all feudal privileges; and made other concessions to the popular feeling.

The Hungarian Diet soon thought proper to extend these benefits to the Servians and Croats; and though they at first rejoiced, in common with the Hungarians, in consequence of their having been raised to the rank of freemen, they were in a short time persuaded by Austrian agents—amongst whom was their own archbishop—that the Hungarians intended to subjugate them, and to destroy their religion and nationality. An insurrectionary movement against Hungary was soon organised, and the first outbreak occurred in June, 1848. Arms, ammunition, and stores were secretly furnished by Austria; and Austrian officers, in disguise, led the Servians to battle. Thousands were slain on both sides; towns and villages were burnt, and the frontier districts laid waste. Most of the Hungarian troops were at this period fighting the battles of Austria in Italy; and Kossuth displayed extraordinary energy in raising means and recruits, and in a short time enabled the Hungarian ministry to organise ten battalions of volunteers, who



were called *Honveds*, or "Defenders of Home."

In the September of 1848, the Croats crossed the Drave, and invaded Hungary with a force of 30,000 men. The emperor of Austria issued a proclamation, ordering them to retire to their own country; but their leader had good reason to question the sincerity of the command, and did not hesitate to disobey it. In fact, the policy of the emperor was to play off the races against each other; and, dreading their strength, he wished to weaken both. As soon as he felt himself strong enough, he threw off the mask. With this object he sent Count Lemberg, as royal commissioner, with orders to dissolve the Hungarian Diet, and assume the direction of affairs. As the count was entering Pesth for this purpose, he was set upon by the populace, dragged from his carriage, and assassinated. From this period all hope of reconciliation was at an end. The Hungarian ministry resigned its functions; and a committee of defence was established to carry on the government, with Kossuth as its president.

Success for a while attended the military efforts of the Hungarians against their oppressors; and it is more than probable that they would have thrown off the Austrian yoke, but for the intervention of Russia. The incapable Ferdinand had abdicated in favour of his nephew Francis Joseph (the present emperor), who applied for assistance to the czar Nicholas. This the latter readily granted; for not only do the continental despotisms seem to regard it as a sacred obligation to assist each other in repressing all popular and revolutionary excitement, but Nicholas well knew, that by helping Austria in the time of her trial, he prevented her from acting against him in the event of his getting involved in a quarrel with the great powers of Europe concerning Constantinople, or any other Turkish possession. Nicholas, in fact, was amply repaid for the assistance he now extended to the emperor of Austria; for in the war of 1854-'55, Francis Joseph trimmed between the belligerent parties; and while calling himself an ally of France and England, protected, as far as he was able, the interests of Russia. But Nicholas had yet another motive for assisting the shaken despotism of Austria: the Poles had flocked eagerly to serve beneath the Hungarian banners, and he

dreaded that, if their arms were successful, he would have another revolution in Poland to suppress. "The insurrection," he observed, in one of those manifestoes which he availed himself of every opportunity to publish, "supported by the influence of our traitors in Poland, of the year 1831, and by reinforcements of refugees and vagabonds from other countries, has given this revolt a most menacing character. In the midst of these disastrous events, his majesty the emperor of Austria has invited us to assist him against the common enemy. We cannot refuse that service. After having invoked the God of battles and the Master of victories to protect the just cause, we have ordered our army to march to stifle revolt, and annihilate audacious anarchists who threaten the tranquillity of our provinces. Let God be with us, and none can resist us; of which we are convinced. Such are the sentiments of all our subjects. Every Russian shares in this hope, and Russia will fulfil her holy mission."

Early in 1849, a Russian army of 90,000 men was marched into Hungary, and another of 60,000 into Transylvania; and these, added to the Austrian and Croatian armies, made a force of upwards of 300,000 armed men to crush the revolutionists. The Hungarians made a brilliant resistance; but their resources were insufficient to contend with so vast a power. They were defeated in several battles by the Russians; and the government, in despair, sought to open separate negotiations with the Russian commander. These proved unavailing; and they then offered to invest General Görgei, the commander of their forces, with full powers to treat for peace. These he refused to accept; and they eventually resolved to appoint him dictator. On this, Kossuth issued a proclamation (August 11th, 1849), announcing his resignation of power into the hands of Görgei, and the investiture of the latter with dictatorial authority. Having solemnly, "before God and the people," charged Görgei to do his best to save the national existence, Kossuth fled into Turkey. Görgei, against whom heavy suspicions of treachery are entertained, immediately concluded a negotiation he had commenced with the Russian general, by agreeing, as governor and dictator, to *surrender unconditionally*. Accordingly, on the 17th of August, his army of 24,000 men, with 150 guns, laid down their arms to the Russians. At the



same time, Görgei directed the officers of the various garrisons and detachments scattered throughout the country, to follow his example. A few only refused; the resistance of the rest was unavailing; and the war was virtually at an end. A large number of the officers and soldiers, as well as civilians, succeeded in escaping into Turkey, where they were hospitably received. Austria and Russia made a united demand that the refugees should be given up to the former power, or at least expelled from Turkey. The Porte nobly refused to do either, notwithstanding threats of force were made use of to intimidate it into compliance. Russia would possibly have put these threats into execution; but as England and France announced their determination of supporting the sultan's decision by the presence of their fleets, if necessary, the refugees were permitted to remain without further molestation.

In Hungary, the suppression of the revolution was followed by a series of trials and executions, attended by circumstances of extreme cruelty. The fate of Count Louis Batthyany, the president of the revolutionary ministry, elicited great sympathy. He was condemned by a council of war to be hanged, an ignominy which he endeavoured to escape by unsuccessfully attempting suicide. He was afterwards shot, his estates confiscated, and his wife and children exiled. The country has since, until quite recently, been subjected to military rule. All the national privileges have been abrogated, and the people subjected to a succession of severe coercive measures. Almost the only permanent benefit which has been secured by the revolution, appears to be the abolition of the feudal privileges and distinctions, which have not been reimposed, and are not likely to be, as it is not the policy of the government to restore the power of the nobles.

Shortly after the surrender of the Hungarian army, and the consequent annihilation of the revolutionary cause, the emperor Nicholas published the subjoined manifesto:—"Russia will fulfil her holy mission." Such were the words that we addressed to our well-beloved subjects when we announced to them, according to the desire of our ally the emperor of Austria, that we had commanded our armies to stifle the war in Hungary, and there establish the legitimate authority of the emperor. Under the protection of God, that object is

accomplished. In less than two months, our brave troops, after numerous and brilliant victories in Transylvania and under the walls of Debreczin, have marched from victory to victory—from Galicia to Pesth, from Pesth to Arad, from the Buckovina and Moldavia to the Banat. Finally, the bands of insurgents, hurled back in every direction—from north to east by ourselves, from the west and south by the Austrian army—have laid down their arms before the Russian army, appealing to our mediation to solicit a magnanimous pardon from their legitimate sovereign. After having holily performed our promise, we have ordered our victorious troops to return within the limits of the empire. With a heart penetrated with gratitude to the Dispenser of all blessings, we cry out, from the innermost recesses of our soul, *'Nobiscum Deus! audite populi et vincemini, quia nobiscum Deus!'*"

Such language, on such an occasion, is both startling and painful. It is an impious arrogance for a despotic ruler, or indeed for any sovereign whatever, to assume that his cause is that of heaven; his will identical with that of the Deity! But what must we think of such effusions, when employed in vain self-glorifications over successful butchery? It might be a painful necessity on the part of Austria—a necessity arising out of her own misdeeds and evil government—to shed the blood of Hungarian patriots. But the intervention of Russia was not called for by any state necessity on her part. The emperor Nicholas poured out his battalions against the unhappy Hungarians from sinister motives towards the sovereign whom he interposed to protect; from a morbid and bitter hatred of liberty; from a hope that he would make absolutism universal and supreme over Europe; and a desire to extinguish in blood, on the battle-field and the scaffold, every effort of the oppressed nations to relieve themselves from the dread incubus of military tyranny that oppressed them. In the execution of such work, the emperor Nicholas certainly performed the *mission* which he and his predecessor, Alexander, had forced upon Russia; but to apply the term "holy" to the work of tyranny, to the making nations obey the arbitrary whims of one man intoxicated with excess of power, is at once a falsehood and a profanity. It is difficult to say whether these high-placed despots are secretly atheists,



who use religion as an instrument of coercive government—a state property to work out their own selfish ends—or whether, from a long use of insincere language with

respect to the will of the Deity, they have really come to believe that their own blind and evil actions are the result of divine inspiration!

## CHAPTER LX.

DISPUTE RESPECTING THE HOLY PLACES AT JERUSALEM; INTERFERENCE OF FRANCE AND OF RUSSIA; NICHOLAS DEMANDS A PROTECTIVE POWER OVER ALL THE GREEK CHRISTIANS IN THE OTTOMAN DOMINIONS; REJECTION OF HIS DEMANDS, AND RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF THE DANUBIAN PROVINCES; THE VIENNA NOTE; THE PORTE DECLARES WAR AGAINST RUSSIA; DESTRUCTION OF A TURKISH FLEET AT SINOPE; ENGLAND AND FRANCE, AFTER THE INSOLENT RECEPTION OF A FINAL ULTIMATUM BY THE CZAR, DECLARE WAR AGAINST RUSSIA.

EMPIRES and nations grow old, decay, and perish, even as do men. The analogy may be carried further: as some men, by misuse of their strength grow prematurely old and feeble, so some states, by an abuse of their power, become the prey of powerful neighbours, as did Poland; or, in the case of empires, are broken up by the mutiny and separation of dependent provinces.

The Ottoman empire is a remarkable instance of this axiomatic truth. At one period the terror of Europe (which she threatened to subjugate, and which only preserved its independence and its religious faith by many sanguinary battles), Turkey has come to be an object of compassion to those states of Europe who do not desire its destruction that they may swell their possessions by its spoils. The accident of being necessary to the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe, has given to every great European state, except Russia, a motive to keep it in such a degree of power as is necessary to ensure it from dismemberment and subjugation. Unfortunately, the downward progress of Turkey, during the reign of the sultan Mahmoud, was remarkably rapid. Internal excitement and revolutions; the opposition of powerful pashas; savage wars with dependent states; the intrigues at Constantinople of the ambassadors of contending nations; a succession of wars with Russia; seven severe campaigns with the insurgent Greeks, ending in the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, and the emancipation of Greece from the power of the Ottoman; the maiming of its military strength by the destruction of the Janissaries, regarded as the bul-

wark of Turkey during a period of five centuries; the exhausting campaigns of 1828 and 1829; the disastrous treaty of Adrianople; the prostration of the sultan's forces before those of his vassal, Mehemet Ali; the loss of Egypt; and the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi—formed a dark list of national calamities for Turkey, which seemed the presage of her dissolution as an empire, and the extinction of her power in Europe.

The emperor Nicholas, who constantly reflected upon these incidents, appears to have thought that Turkey was ready for the sickle; and it is evident that he stood prepared to interfere on the first opportunity that promised to reward his aggressive attempts by the possession of the long-coveted city of Constantinople. Indeed, such was the inflexible perseverance of the Russian cabinet in its design upon Turkish territory, that the "Eastern difficulty" had become a matter which occasionally perplexed every statesman in Europe. In the year 1836, Lord Dudley Stuart, in a debate on Eastern affairs in the British House of Commons, thus sounded the alarm on this subject:—"Russia has 50,000,000 subjects in Europe alone, exclusive of Asia; an army of 700,000 men, and a navy of eighty sail of line-of-battle ships and frigates, guided by the energy of a government of unmitigated despotism, at whose absolute and unlimited disposal stand persons and property of every description. These formidable means are constantly applied to purposes of territorial aggrandisement; and every new acquisition becomes the means of gaining others. Who can tell that the Hellespont may not be



seized by Russia at any moment? She has a large fleet in the Black Sea, full command of the mouths of the Danube, and of the commercial marine of Odessa and Trebizond; in three days she may be at Constantinople from Sebastopol; and if once there, the Dardanelles will be so fortified by Russian engineers, that she can never be expelled except by a general war. She could be in entire possession of these important Straits before any expedition could be sent from this country—even if such a thing could be thought of—against the enormous military force at the command of Russia. That Russia is determined to have the Dardanelles, is evident from the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, by which she began by excluding the ships of all other nations. The effect of this treaty was to exclude any ship of war from these Straits, except with the permission of Russia. Russia might at any moment insist on the exclusion of our ships of war from the Dardanelles. Nay, she has already done so; for when Lord Durham, going on his late embassy to the court of St. Petersburg, arrived at the Dardanelles in a frigate, he was obliged to go on board the *Pluto*, an armed vessel without her guns, before he could pass the Straits; and when he arrived at Sebastopol no salute was fired; and the excuse given was, that they did not know the *Pluto* from a merchant vessel. But both before and since Lord Durham went, Russian ships of war, with their guns out and their streamers flying, passed through the Black Sea to the Dardanelles, and again through the Dardanelles to the Black Sea. Russia has now fifteen ships of the line and seven frigates in the

Black Sea. Sebastopol is only three days' sail from the Hellespont. Turkey has no force capable of resisting such an armament; the forts of the Hellespont are incapable of defence against a land force, for they are open in the rear. Russia might any day have 100,000 men in Constantinople, before England or France could fit out expeditions to defend it." These statements were not denied by ministers; but both Lord Palmerston and the house were disinclined to enter upon the consideration of a perplexing and disagreeable subject, through which they could not see their way. A motion, therefore, for the production of the correspondence in relation to the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, was negatived.

This was the unsatisfactory state of affairs, when an apparently trivial dispute was to bring the whole question into violent discussion, and to lead to the greatest war which had taken place in Europe since the fall of Napoleon. The possession of the holy places at Jerusalem, which were the Temple, the supposed sepulchre of the Saviour,\* and some others, had long been matters of contention between the monks of the Latin and Greek churches. A recent dispute, also, had sprung up relative to the right of repairing the Temple. This the Turkish government had endeavoured to settle by repairing the Temple themselves—a course which did not give satisfaction to either party. Louis Napoleon, anxious to obtain the approbation of the pope, undertook the patronage and defence of the Latin monks. In 1851 he sent M. Lavalette to Constantinople, with an imperious demand that

\* "A protestant, familiar with the Holy Scriptures, but ignorant of tradition and the geography of modern Jerusalem, finds himself a good deal 'mazed' when he first looks for the sacred sites. The Holy Sepulchre is not in a field without the walls, but in the midst, and in the best part of the town, under the roof of the great church which I have been talking about. It is a handsome tomb, of oblong form, partly subterranean, and partly above ground, and closed in on all sides, except the one by which it is entered. You descend into the interior by a few steps, and there find an altar with burning tapers. This is the spot held in greater sanctity than any other in Jerusalem. When you have seen enough of it, you feel perhaps weary of the busy crowd, and inclined for a gallop; you ask your dragoman whether there will be time before sunset to send for horses and take a ride to Mount Calvary. 'Mount Calvary, Signor?—eccolo! it is upstairs—on the first floor.' In effect, you ascend, if I remember rightly, just thirteen steps, and then you are shown the now golden sockets in which the crosses of our Lord and the two thieves were fixed. All this is

startling; but the truth is, that the city having gathered round the Sepulchre (the main point of interest), has gradually crept northward; and thus in great measure are occasioned the many geographical surprises that puzzle the 'Bible Christian.' The church of the Holy Sepulchre comprises very compendiously almost all the spots associated with the closing career of our Lord. Just there, on your right, he stood and wept; by the pillar, on your left, he was scourged; on the spot just before you he was crowned with the crown of thorns; up there he was crucified, and down here he was buried. A locality is assigned to even the minutest event connected with the recorded history of our Saviour; even the spot where the cock crew, when Peter denied his Master, is ascertained, and surrounded by the walls of an Arminian convent. Many protestants are wont to treat these traditions contemptuously; and those who distinguish themselves from their brethren by the appellation of 'Bible Christians,' are almost fierce in their denunciation of these supposed errors."—*Eothen*.



certain privileges should be granted to the Latin Christians, and threatened that a French fleet should be sent to the Dardanelles in the event of the demand not being complied with. The sultan assented; and the emperor Nicholas, who regards himself as the representative of the Greek Christians, immediately interposed, on the assumption that the privileges recently granted by the sultan to the Latin Christians, derogated from the rights of the Greek ones. The dispute between France and Russia grew warm, and the perplexed sultan in vain attempted to settle the question in a manner which should be satisfactory to them both. Nicholas had found his opportunity, and he expressed a determination to have an equivalent for the privileges of which the Greek church had been deprived, and a security that they should remain undisturbed for the future. Lord John Russell, then foreign secretary in the English cabinet, interfered as a pacificator, deprecated the employment of any means calculated to display the weakness of the Ottoman empire, and especially urged the contending parties "to refrain from putting armies and fleets in motion, for the purpose of making the tomb of Christ a cause of quarrel among Christians."

Such was the aspect of affairs, when, on the 28th of February, 1853, Prince Mentschikoff arrived at Constantinople as a special ambassador from St. Petersburg. In an interview which he had with the sultan, he expressed the dissatisfaction of the emperor Nicholas, and demanded the execution of a *secret* treaty, which, besides settling the dispute concerning the Holy Places, was also to define certain general relations between Russia and the Porte. The sultan was alarmed, and communicated his apprehensions to the ambassadors of England and France. The government of the latter power, desirous of averting an aspect of things which might disturb the peace of Europe, withdrew its demands, and the dispute appeared to die away. Towards the end of April it was announced that the misunderstanding respecting the Holy Places was virtually adjusted.

Unhappily this was not the case. On the 5th of May, Prince Mentschikoff presented a note to the Ottoman minister, in which he demanded that a protective power over all the Greek Christians, who were the subjects of the sultan (amounting to about 12,000,000 persons), should be conceded to

the emperor of Russia. The offensiveness of this arrogant demand was increased by an imperious notice that a reply was expected within five days, and if delayed longer than that period, the omission would be regarded as a want of respect towards his government "which would impose upon him the most painful duty."

To yield to the demand of Russia would have deprived the sultan of his authority over about one-half of his subjects, and brought into his empire a divided sovereignty, which must necessarily have introduced such confusion as would have been eventually fatal to his rule. The Turkish minister correctly described the result of such a compliance as "a virtual partition of the empire." Abdul-Medjid replied, that the privileges granted by the Porte to its Christian subjects were its own act, and not dictated or regulated by treaties with any foreign power. It therefore rejected the demands made by Russia, as incompatible with the preservation of Turkish independence.

The Porte also laid the case before the French and English ambassadors, who instantly communicated with their respective governments, who regarded the demands of Russia as inadmissible, but were anxious to prevent any misunderstanding which might give rise to hostilities. The Prussian minister, on being consulted, sparingly admitted the validity of the objections taken by the Porte to the demand of Prince Mentschikoff; and the Austrian minister, equally cautious, considered the proceeding of the Russian ambassador as dangerous.

Mentschikoff, on receiving the reply of the sultan, abruptly withdrew from Constantinople; and the emperor Nicholas caused the aged Count Nesselrode to address a final *ultimatum* of a hostile character to the Turkish minister. It contained the following passage, which necessarily tended to produce that outbreak the emperor desired, or an intimidation of the sultan into a compliance with his demands:—"The emperor, my master, has informed me that Prince Mentschikoff was *obliged* to quit Constantinople, after a stay there of three months, without having been able to obtain the guarantees which he demanded for the rights and privileges of the Greek church. The emperor considers the refusal of the Porte as a complete want of consideration—as an *affront* offered to his person. He approves completely of the conduct of his



ambassador. In his solicitude for the preservation of the Ottoman empire, he recommends the Porte to reflect once more on the disastrous consequences of its refusal, the whole responsibility of which must rest upon it; and he accords, for the purpose, a final delay of eight days. At the expiration of that period the Russian troops will cross the frontiers, not to wage war, but to obtain from the sultan the concessions which he refused to accord by the way of a friendly arrangement. Count de Nesselrode hopes, however, that the Porte, better advised, will yield before the emperor shall need to have recourse to means which are repugnant to his sentiments for the sultan, Abdul-Medjid, but the employment of which is imperatively imposed on him by his *conscience*, and by that of his people."

The Porte was not intimidated by this insulting proceeding: the eight days expired without an answer being returned to the Russian *ultimatum*; the imperial order was given; and on the 3rd of July, 1853, a Russian army crossed the river Pruth (the boundary which divides Russia from the Danubian provinces), and entered upon the military occupation of Moldavia and Wallachia!

This outrage was equivalent to a declaration of war against Turkey, which Nicholas knew was in no condition singly to withstand the enormous pressure he could bring to bear upon it. The question with him was—would France or England feel so great an interest in the cause of the sultan as to draw the sword in his behalf? The emperor appears to have thought not; and with regard to Austria and Prussia, he had no fear: he knew the weakness of the first, and the cringing submissiveness of the last. England, he trusted, he could bribe; and France, if inaccessible to bribery, he could defy.

The views of the emperor Nicholas are vividly portrayed in some conversations which he had, a few months before the passage of the Pruth by his troops, with Sir G. H. Seymour, the British ambassador at St. Petersburg. In a conversation respecting the affairs of the East (on the 14th of January), the emperor observed—"You know the dreams and plans in which the empress Catherine was in the habit of indulging: these were handed down to our time; but while I inherited immense territorial possessions, I did not inherit those visions—those intentions, if you like to call

them so. On the contrary, my country is so vast, so happily circumstanced in every way, that it would be unreasonable in me to desire more territory or more power than I possess. On the contrary, I am the first to tell you that our great, perhaps our only danger, is that which could arise from an extension given to an empire already too large. Close to us lies Turkey, and, in our present condition, nothing better for our interest can be desired. The times have gone by when we had anything to fear from the fanatical spirit or the military enterprise of the Turks. Yet the country is strong enough, or has hitherto been strong enough, to preserve its independence, and to ensure respectful treatment from other countries. Well, in that empire there are several millions of Christians, whose interests I am called upon to watch over, while the right of doing so is secured to me by treaty. I may truly say, that I make a moderate and sparing use of my right, and I will freely confess that it is one which is attended with obligations occasionally very inconvenient; but I cannot recede from the discharge of a distinct duty. Our religion, as established in this country, came to us from the East; and there are feelings as well as obligations, which never must be lost sight of. Now, Turkey, in the condition which I have described, has, by degrees, fallen into such a state of decrepitude, that, eager as we all are for the prolonged existence of the man\* (and that I am as desirous as you can be for the continuance of his life, I beg you to believe), he may suddenly die upon our hands. We cannot resuscitate what is dead; and if the Turkish empire falls, it falls to rise no more. I put it to you, therefore, whether it is not better to be provided beforehand for a contingency, than to incur the chaos, confusion, and the certainty of a European war, all of which must attend the catastrophe if it should occur unexpectedly, and before some ulterior system has been sketched? This is the point to which I am desirous you should call the attention of your government."

Lord John Russell, on behalf of the English government, replied at length to this conversation, observing, that it would

\* "The sick man" was the phrase usually adopted by the emperor in reference to Turkey, when engaged in familiar conversation concerning the affairs of that empire.



hardly be consistent with the friendly feelings towards the sultan, which animate the emperor of Russia no less than the queen of Great Britain, to dispose beforehand of the provinces under his dominion. He added, that an agreement made in such a case tends very surely to hasten the contingency for which it is intended to provide; and recommended that the utmost forbearance should be manifested towards Turkey.

On the 21st of February, Nicholas revealed himself far more explicitly to Sir G. H. Seymour. "The emperor went on to say," reports the ambassador, "that in the event of the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, he thought it might be less difficult to arrive at a satisfactory territorial arrangement than was commonly believed. 'The principalities are,' he said, 'an independent state under my protection; this might so continue. Servia might receive the same form of government; so again with Bulgaria. There seems to be no reason why this province should not form an independent state. *As to Egypt, I quite understand the importance to England of that territory. I can only say, then, that if in the event of a distribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall of the empire, you should take possession of Egypt, I shall have no objections to offer.* I would say the same thing of CANDIA. That island might suit you; and I do not know why it should not become an English possession.'"

The bribe was rejected. The Earl of Clarendon, who had succeeded Lord John Russell at the Foreign-office, replied—"England desires no territorial aggrandisement, and could be no party to a previous arrangement from which she was to derive any such benefit." Having failed with respect to England, Nicholas made similar overtures to France, and received from the emperor, Napoleon III., a similar refusal.

When, a few months after the conversations above spoken of, the czar poured his troops into the Danubian provinces, he issued a manifesto, in which he observed—"Having exhausted all the means of persuasion, and all the means of obtaining, in a friendly manner, the satisfaction due to our just reclamations, we have deemed it indispensable to order our troops to enter the Danubian principalities, to show the Porte how far its obstinacy may lead it. Nevertheless, even now it is not our intention to commence war. By the occupation of the principalities, we wish to have

in our hand a *pledge which will guarantee to us, in every respect, the re-establishment of our rights.*"

England and France hesitated, and, at first, stood aloof from the assistance of Turkey; and fears were entertained that the latter power must submit to the demands of Russia, or enter singly upon a ruinous contest with it. France was the first to speak in favour of the Porte, and declared that it was ready to co-operate with England in upholding the Turkish government. The example of the emperor Napoleon was shortly followed by the British ministry. To add weight to the expression of their views, the western powers gave directions to a combined fleet to anchor in Besika Bay, near the Straits of the Dardanelles.

Austria, anxious to avert hostilities, called upon the representatives of the great powers at Vienna, to consult together, with the view of arriving at the adoption of some proposal which could be submitted to the Porte, with the sanction of all their governments. The ambassadors of England, France, Austria, and Prussia, framed a document, which is known as "The Vienna Note." It was readily accepted by the emperor Nicholas, but rejected by the sultan, unless modified in a manner expressed by his ministers. These modifications were rejected by Nicholas, whose reasons for so doing were explained in a despatch by Count Nesselrode. This document was considered as betraying the real intentions of the czar, and as justifying the conduct of Turkey; for it showed that the Vienna note could be so construed as to leave the same scope as before for the pretensions of the Russian cabinet.

The passions of the Turks were aroused by the occupation of the Danubian provinces, and their religious fanaticism excited by the claims of the emperor. The sultan, therefore, at the desire of the grand council, declared war against Russia on the 26th of September, 1853. Prince Gortschakoff was summoned by Omar Pasha (a converted Austrian, to whom the command of the Turkish army was entrusted) to evacuate the principalities. As this was declined, preparations were pressed forward for the purpose of ejecting him. Some further unsatisfactory mediation on the part of the representatives of the four powers took place, but it led to no result. The emperor Nicholas arrogantly desired that a Turkish



plenipotentiary should proceed to the headquarters of his army, or wait upon him at St. Petersburg, for the purpose of negotiation—a proposition necessarily regarded as inadmissible. In a similar spirit, he required of the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia an absolute and unconditional armed neutrality, assuring them of his *protection* in the event of such a course exposing them to the hostility of the western powers. Such, in fact, was the unbending attitude of the czar, that an appeal to arms, on the part of France and England, became inevitable; and early in the February of 1854, the diplomatic relations between them and Russia were suspended.

The Russian army prepared to winter on the banks of the Danube, where they conducted themselves in a very arbitrary manner, and treated the inhabitants of Wallachia as a conquered people. Omar Pasha, who had an army of 120,000 men between the Danube and the Balkan, had commenced hostilities towards the end of October, 1853, and a number of skirmishes and engagements took place, mostly terminating in favour of the Turks. Of these early trials of strength, the most important was the battle of Oltenitza, in which a Russian detachment was compelled to retire with great loss.

While these events were taking place on the banks of the Danube, a Turkish squadron, consisting of seven frigates, three corvettes, and two steamers, left the Bosphorus, to cruise in the Black Sea. As war had not been declared by Russia, and the emperor had affirmed that he should stand merely on the defensive, the Turkish vessels neither expected nor were prepared for an attack—an imprudence of a dangerous kind. Being discerned by the Russian admiral, Nachimoff, he sent to Sebastopol for reinforcements, and, on their arrival, approached, on the 30th of November, under cover of a dense fog, to within half a mile of the Turkish squadron, as it lay in the harbour of Sinope. The Turks were taken by surprise, and their force was very inferior to that of their foes. Yet they fought with a desperate bravery, and the engagement lasted for about two hours and

a-half, when all the Turkish vessels, with the exception of one which escaped and carried the fatal news to Constantinople, were burnt, blown up, or driven, shattered wrecks, upon the shore. About 2,000 of the Turks perished; and such was the vindictive spirit of the Russians, that they poured an incessant shower of shot upon the poor wounded wretches who were struggling in the water and striving to reach the shore. In commemoration of this proceeding, the emperor Nicholas appointed a *Te Deum* to be sung in all the churches of St. Petersburg, and the city to be illuminated.

The French and English fleets, which had hitherto been lying in the Bosphorus, now entered the Black Sea; but that of Russia was safe within the fortifications of the famous harbour of Sebastopol. Neither England nor France had yet declared war against Russia; and late in February, 1854, they sent a final *ultimatum* to Nicholas, requiring that Russia should pledge herself, within six days, to evacuate the principalities before the end of April. At the same time they signified, that they should consider the non-compliance of the czar as equivalent to a declaration of war. He haughtily returned, that to the summons of the allied powers, no answer would be given by the imperial court!

War was accordingly declared against Russia, by France and England, on the 27th of March. The *London Gazette* declared, that “her majesty is compelled, by the sense of what is due to the honour of her crown, to the interests of her people, and to the independence of the states of Europe, to come forward in defence of an ally whose territory is invaded, and whose dignity and independence are assailed.” Nicholas, with that conventional use of religion which ever characterised him, endeavoured to convert the war into a crusade by enlisting the fanaticism of his people against his enemies. “Russia,” said he, “has not forgotten God! It is not for worldly interests that she has taken up arms. She combats for the Christian faith—for the defence of her co-religionists, oppressed by implacable enemies.”



CHAPTER LXI.

THE WAR ON THE DANUBE AND IN ASIA; THE ALLIED TROOPS PROCEED TO THE EAST, AND AN ALLIED FLEET TO THE BALTIC; BOMBARDMENT OF ODESSA IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE AUTHORITIES HAVING OUTRAGED A FLAG OF TRUCE; LORD RAGLAN; THE ALLIED TROOPS ARE REMOVED TO VARNA, WHERE THEY SUFFER TERRIBLY FROM THE CHOLERA; THE EXPEDITION TO THE CRIMEA; SIEGE OF SILISTRIA; PROCEEDINGS OF THE ALLIED FLEETS IN THE BALTIC, AND DESTRUCTION OF BOMARSUND; AFFAIR OF PETROPAULOVSKI; EXPEDITION TO THE WHITE SEA; THE RUSSIANS RETIRE FROM THE DANUBIAN PROVINCES; FAILURE OF A RENEWED ATTEMPT AT NEGOTIATION.

THE desultory war on the banks of the Danube proceeded, and the Russians suffered a defeat at the village of Citate, on the 6th of January, 1854. They fought with great courage, but were massacred in heaps by the furious Turks. It is said that 1,500 Russians were killed, and about 2,000 wounded. The conflict was renewed upon the 7th and 8th, when the Russians were again driven back with considerable loss. This victory created so much confidence in the Turkish troops, that they somewhat prematurely expressed a belief that one Turk was a match for three Russians.

Omar Pasha had caused some formidable fortifications to be erected at Kalafat, and garrisoned them with 30,000 men. This place, it is said, General Gortschakoff had resolved on taking at any cost whatever. But the affair of Citate had made the Russians prudent, and the taking of Kalafat was postponed until the arrival of reinforcements; although, after experiencing heavy losses from sickness, they had still about 94,000 men on the banks of the Danube. Several efforts were ultimately made to take Kalafat; but the design was eventually abandoned. Of the frequent skirmishes in this locality, often attended with serious loss to the Russians, and terminating mostly in favour of the Turks, it is needless to speak fully.

In Asia the fortune of war had been in the other direction. During the November of 1853, the Turks had sustained a serious defeat at Akhaltzik, and another at Baschkady-Lar, though they had been successful in an attempt to capture St. Nicholas—a fort on the coast of the Black Sea. This momentary success, however, was immeasurably outweighed by a defeat which the Russians inflicted upon them near Gumri, and another in the neighbourhood of the fortress of Akiska.

In the month of February, the departure of British troops to the East commenced;

and on the 11th of March, the first division of the British fleet proceeded to the Baltic, under the command of Sir Charles Napier, of whom rather extravagant expectations had been formed. He was soon joined by the French fleet, under Vice-admiral Parseval-Deschênes. The first divisions of French troops also, under Generals Canrobert and Bosquet, proceeded to the East, and, together with the English, landed at Gallipoli. A convention had already been concluded between France and England, binding both nations not to make peace with Russia without each other's consent, and pledging the contracting parties "to secure Europe against the return of the deplorable complications which have disturbed the general peace." The governments of Austria and Prussia were no parties to this convention; but on the 20th of April, they entered into a quadruple treaty with France and England, by which they gave a sanction to the war carried on against Russia.

The first act of active hostilities against the latter power, was the bombardment, by Admirals Dundas and Hamelin, of the commercial but fortified town of Odessa, on the shores of the Black Sea. It arose out of a singular outrage on the part of the Russian authorities. On the declaration of war, the allied fleet in the Black Sea sent the English steam-frigate *Furious* to Odessa, to take on board the consuls, and such British or French subjects as might be anxious to leave the town. The vessel carried a flag of truce at her mast-head, and sent forward a boat, also bearing a white flag, to demand the consuls. Notwithstanding this, seven cannon-shots were fired from the batteries of the town at the boat, and in the direction of the ship, though happily without doing any mischief. The allied admirals demanded an explanation of this treacherous conduct, and received a reply at once false and unsatis-



factory. They then insisted that all British, French, and Russian vessels at anchor at Odessa, should be given up, as a reparation of the insult offered to the allied fleet. As the Russian governor returned no answer, the town was bombarded on the 22nd of April—the imperial magazine and a Russian frigate blown up, the dockyard burnt, together with about twenty or thirty merchantmen, and a part of the town. During the same month, the Russian batteries at the mouths of the Danube were bombarded by part of the allied fleet, and declared in a state of blockade, in order to cut off all supplies intended for the Russian army.

Why the French and English troops were sent to Gallipoli—a town utterly unfitted for the reception of large masses of troops, and where they could be of no service whatever—is a question that has been frequently asked, and never satisfactorily answered. The invading Russians were in Wallachia; and the object of the war was to drive them out of it as rapidly as possible. The banks of the Danube, then, was clearly the place for the French and English troops, if it was intended that they should render speedy and effective assistance to the Turks. It has been urged, that they were sent to Gallipoli for the purpose of protecting Constantinople. But that city was not threatened; and if it had been, the allied troops at Gallipoli were not at all likely to be of any service to it. Even in such a case, the British and French had better have been stationed on the Danube, at the passes of the Balkans, or at Adrianople; points which the Russians must have passed before they could approach to Constantinople. If the reader will glance at a map of Turkey in Europe, he will see that Gallipoli was altogether out of the way, and divided from Constantinople by the whole extent of the Sea of Marmora. England and France, though they had declared war, were suspected of an unmanly disinclination to enter upon it; and they seem to have trusted to intimidating the emperor Nicholas by a mere military demonstration. This is probably the reason why they sent their troops to Gallipoli; and if such is the fact, they paid dearly enough for this boyish and procrastinating conduct before the conclusion of the war.

Lord Raglan (previously Lord Fitzroy Somerset) had been appointed to the chief command of the British army in the East; and he landed, not at Gallipoli, where his

troops were, but at Constantinople, on the 28th of April. He had been in the army since his sixteenth year; served as aide-de-camp, and afterwards secretary, to the Duke of Wellington; been present in every engagement throughout the Peninsular campaign; and he had lost his right arm at Waterloo. That he was a brave and steady routine soldier may be readily allowed; but that he was utterly destitute of those qualities which make an able general, was soon lamentably apparent. But England had not been engaged in any great war for nearly forty years, and such generals as she possessed were mostly past service. Perhaps, considering the conventional rules of the service, Lord Raglan was the best that could be had; but if such was the case, our army must have been in a peculiarly inefficient state. Happily it is not upon her armies that Great Britain depends for the maintenance of her high pretensions.

The French army destined for the East was entrusted to the command of Marshal St. Arnaud, a soldier who had seen much service, and experienced many vicissitudes; having in early life adopted the stage as a profession, but leaving it for the army in consequence of the disappointment of his expectations.

Some time was permitted to elapse, apparently to give the emperor Nicholas an opportunity of retracing the step he had taken. No such result followed; and in the month of June, the English and French troops were removed to Varna, a town on the coast of the Black Sea, and much nearer to the theatre of war. The following month, the cholera, accompanied by typhus fever, broke out in the allied camps at Varna, and committed terrible ravages. A correspondent from that place, writing on the 9th of August, said—"Our troops are, at present, losing thirty men a-day. The French losses from cholera are frightful. The disease is not much on the wane among them; and there are divisions in which they die at the rate of seventy and eighty a-day." So severe were their sufferings, and so depressed were they from thus perishing in inactivity, that the emperor Napoleon addressed to them a sympathetic proclamation, in which he observed—"You have not yet fought; but already you have struggled courageously against death. A scourge, fatal though transitory, has not arrested your ardour. France, and the sove-



reign whom she has chosen, cannot witness without deep emotion, or without making every effort to give assistance to such energy and such sacrifices. The First Consul said, in 1797, in a proclamation to his army, 'The first quality required in a soldier, is the power of supporting fatigues and privations. Courage is only a secondary one.' The first you are now displaying. Who can deny you the possession of the second?" As soon as the cholera declined at Varna, a tremendous fire broke out there, and destroyed more than a quarter of the town.

The cholera did not confine its ravages to the troops at Varna; it broke out in the allied fleets in the Black Sea, and spread death and consternation among the sailors.

Action was required to dispel the gloom which was occasioned in both fleets and armies by this terrible visitation. For some time, an expedition to the Crimea, the Italy of Russia, had been contemplated. Many councils of war were held, and many delays took place: at length, on the 5th and 7th of September, the French and English fleets and armies left Varna, and sailed for the Crimea. The combined fleets amounted to nearly 400 vessels of various kinds, and presented a grand and imposing sight. At night, when all the ships had lights hung out, the fleets looked like some enormous city upon the waters. Though the Black Sea is subject to sudden storms during this period of the year, yet the voyage was effected in safety; and at daybreak on the 14th the allies arrived at the Crimea, off a place called the Old Fort, or Staroe Ukiplenie, about thirty miles to the north of Sebastopol. No Russian troops appeared to oppose the landing, which occupied altogether no less than three days. The allied army at this period consisted of 60,000 men; being composed of 27,000 English, 25,000 French, and 8,000 Turks.

Here we will leave them, while we briefly record the events of the war which, up to this period, had occurred in other localities. As the spring returned, hostilities proceeded on the banks of the Danube with great energy. On the 23rd of March, an army of 35,000 Russians, under General Lüders, crossed the Danube, and succeeded in establishing themselves in a part of Bulgaria called the Dobrudscha. They also took several forts by which the Bulgarian bank of the Danube was defended in this direction.

On the 30th of the same month, and on the 1st of April, the Turks made excursions from Kalafat, and, on each occasion, inflicted a defeat upon the Russians. The well-known city and fortress of Silistria was surrounded by an army of 35,000 Russians, and bombarded without effect in the month of April. Siege operations were commenced on the 11th of May. On that occasion, the cannonade began at daybreak, and was prolonged till about seven in the evening. Day after day passed on, and the attack and the defence were carried forward with equal vigour. Repeated storming parties were directed against the intrenchments; mines and countermines overthrew the works and convulsed the soil; and both within and without the fortifications, blood sank into the earth in horrible profusion. The Turks looked anxiously for the assistance of the allies; but none was afforded. Captain Butler and Lieutenant Nasmyth, two British officers who served as volunteers, alone fought for the Turks; and the former especially, by his knowledge of fortification, and his successful efforts in keeping up the spirits of the Moslems, was of great service. Unhappily, he fell a victim to his devotion to their cause, and sunk from the effects of a wound he received on the forehead from a half-spent ball. Though but in his twenty-seventh year, it is admitted that the defence of Silistria, during the last half of the period over which the struggle extended, was due to his excessive exertions. Only two hours after his death, it was known that the Russians had raised the siege and retired. They had kept up the bombardment until about half-past three of the night of the 22nd of June; and on the morning of the 23rd, it was discovered that they had retreated.

By the time the siege of Silistria was raised, it is estimated that the Russians had lost 50,000 men since their entry into the principalities. What was of more consequence, the confidence of the Russian troops in this locality was shaken, and they could no longer feel that they were employed in a successful cause. Prior to this event, the Austrian government appeared disposed to take part in the war, and it entered into an alliance with Turkey, for the purpose of assisting that power to reclaim the Danubian provinces from the grasp of the czar. In addition to this, the Austrian government requested the St. Petersburg



cabinet to specify exactly the time when the imperial troops would have returned to their own country, and trusted that the time named would not be a very distant one. The reply of Nicholas to this request, sent on the 24th of June—that is, immediately on his receiving news of the raising of the siege of Silistria—was, “that as a mark of high consideration for Austria, Russia consents to evacuate the Turkish territories!” The pretence was too transparent to deceive any one. Austria knew very well, and all Europe knew, that the czar had been baffled by Turkish valour—that he had given orders to retreat from Silistria, to abandon Little Wallachia, and to retire towards the Pruth, because his troops were scarcely able to maintain their position, and because he feared the co-operation of Austria with England and France, and wished, by his late and ill-affected complaisance, to prevent it. A further reply of the czar was not so compliant. “The emperor,” it said, “will willingly resign the exclusive protectorate over the Greek Christians, if Turkey will accede to a common protectorate of the five powers. He will evacuate the principalities when the western powers evacuate Turkey; but will hold a strong military position in Moldavia as a provisional security.”

The British fleet, which had proceeded to the Baltic under the command of Sir Charles Napier, reached the Gulf of Finland on the 16th of April, and by its presence established a blockade there. The expectations formed respecting the efficiency of this fleet, and the energy of its commanders, were seriously disappointed. It was anticipated that it would certainly attack, if not take, the fortifications of Cronstadt, which defend the approach to the city of St. Petersburg. Admiral Napier considered that the danger of attacking Cronstadt was so great, that he would not be justified in attempting it—an opinion for which he was much censured in this country, though it was shared by the officer in command of the French fleet. For some time a powerful English fleet cruised about, and did little more than take a small fort or so, burn a few villages, together with a number of small trading-vessels, and quantities of pitch, tar, timber, and other stores. Even in these petty proceedings they were not uniformly successful; for on the 7th of June, two British war-steamers were actually repulsed in an attack on Gamba-Karleby—a petty

town, with a population not exceeding 1,800 persons. The loss sustained in this affair, so beneath the dignity of the British flag, amounted in killed, wounded, and missing, to fifty-four men.

When Admiral Napier was joined by Admiral Parseval-Deschênes, the united French and English fleets in the Baltic amounted to fifty-four sail, armed with 2,726 guns, and supplied with 29,150 seamen and marines. Yet with this enormous force at their disposal, the two admirals thought it necessary to send to France for an expeditionary land corps, to enable them to take the fortress of Bomarsund, which mounted no more than ninety-two guns. Bomarsund was first bombarded by the allied fleets on the 21st of June, but from so cautious a distance that they did very little harm. It was again bombarded on the 25th and 26th of June, but without sustaining any serious injury. The reason is plain enough: the allied fleets did very little harm, because they kept so far from the fortress, that their casualties, if they sustained any, were not deemed worth recording.

The French expeditionary corps, numbering 11,000 men, arrived on the 5th of August, and on the 8th they landed on the island of Lumpar, near Bomarsund. The bombardment began on the 13th. Behind the main fortress were two towers, called Fort Tzee and Fort Nottich, each of which contained a garrison of 120 men. The first was attacked by the French, and the last by the English; the allies, however, not only acting in concert, but as parts of the same army. The attack on Fort Tzee by the French commenced at daybreak, and was continued, with very little intermission, until nine o'clock on the following morning, when it was surrendered. It was afterwards accidentally set fire to by a shell, and blew up with a tremendous explosion. On the morning of the 15th, the English battery commenced its fire upon Fort Nottich, which surrendered at six in the evening. The principal fortress, properly called Bomarsund, was not capable of much resistance after its supporting towers had fallen. The attack upon it commenced on the afternoon of the 14th, and was conducted by the land forces, assisted by the *Edinburgh* and one of the French liners; while the *Amphion*, *Ajax*, and *Driver*, fired shot and shell at long range. The bombardment continued during the 15th, and on the 16th



General Bodisco, the governor, hung out a white flag in token of surrender. The Russian soldiers piled their arms in heaps, and were then, to the number of 2,300 men, marched from the fortress to the ships as prisoners. They looked careworn, and exhausted with fatigue; having taken no rest for five days, except at the side of their guns. No less than 139 pieces of artillery were also taken in the different forts, together with provisions for 3,000 men for two years, and magazines containing nearly 200 tons of powder. Some military men have expressed an opinion that, in a short time, the place would have been as strong as Cronstadt; a conclusion from which we dissent, as it had not the natural capabilities of being made into so powerful a fortress. It was the intention of the emperor to build eleven more round forts, and another like Bomarsund. The foundations of some were begun, and the large fort already stood fifteen or twenty feet high. It has been conjectured that Bomarsund was intended to assist in the execution of some further design of an aggressive kind on Sweden. As a permanent occupation of the Aland Islands was regarded as undesirable by either the French or English, Bomarsund was blown up, and left heaps of blackened rafters and masses of masonry. The troops then re-embarked, and the allied fleets proceeded to Hango, the fortifications of which, the Russians, to escape the mortification of defeat and surrender, themselves blew up in the sight of the enemy, and then retreated to Abo. The allied fleet followed to Abo; but finding it strongly guarded, and protected by numerous gun-boats, they valiantly retired!

This exploit, and *reconnaissances* of Cronstadt, formed all that was done by the allied fleets of France and England during this expedition. As the winter approached they gradually retired, and left the Russian coasts to be blockaded by the closing-in of the ice.

While in the Baltic the cannon of France and England were thundering against Bomarsund, the allies experienced something of the nature of a reverse, in a very different and far distant part of the globe. This was the partial repulse of a French and English squadron from the Russian settlement of Petropaulovski,\* on the peninsula of Kamtschatka. Petropaulovski is a station for whalers, and for the Russian fur

trade on the confines of Asia and America. Its remoteness from Europe, and its natural obscurity, would have protected it sufficiently from the cannon of the allied fleets, but that it had attracted notice as a place of refuge for the Russian squadron in the Pacific. It was known that, at the commencement of hostilities, the Russians had three or four ships of war in the Eastern seas, which, if not closely watched, might do considerable injury to our commerce in the Chinese and Australian trade. On this account the British squadron in the Pacific was reinforced by the *Pique*, and Admiral David Price took the command on that station. It was known that two of the Russian ships, the *Aurora* and the *Dwina*, were vessels of war, well-found and manned; and it was the duty of the French and English ships to co-operate in pursuit of them; capture them if possible, or render them unfit for service.

On the 29th of August, the allied fleets arrived off Petropaulovski, and were immediately fired upon from four Russian batteries. Nothing was done that night; but, the next morning, decks were cleared for action. The bombardment had just commenced, under the direction of Admiral Price, when, a little after one o'clock, he went into his cabin, and shot himself through the heart! His mind appears to have given way under too acute a sense of responsibility. In consequence of this startling incident, the preparations for the engagement were suspended. Captain Sir F. Nicholson succeeded to the command of the British moiety of the squadron, and the engagement was recommenced the following morning. A vigorous fire was as vigorously replied to; but in the course of the day the Russian batteries were temporarily silenced. The allies having picked up three American sailors, and received from them what was supposed to be valuable information, landed a body of 700 seamen of both nations, who were led into an ambush, and subjected to a furious fire from Russian sharpshooters. The allies were compelled to retire and re-embark, but not before the English had lost about 120 in killed and wounded, and the French a similar number. On the 7th of September, the allied fleet sailed away from Petropaulovski, and the *Aurora* and the *Dwina* remained safe within its harbour.

On the 21st of May, the *Miranda*, a screw steam-ship of 250 horse-power, together with the *Brisk* steam-sloop, com-

\* That is, settlement of St. Peter and St. Paul.



manded by Captains Lyons and Seymour, sailed from the Downs for the White Sea, where, on the 1st of August, they established a blockade of the Russian ports. This expedition was more successful than the one we have just spoken of. Several Russian merchantmen were captured; the fortified monastery of Solovetskoi, and the little town and fort of Kola, were destroyed; no attempt being made by the Russian government to protect its shores from insult, and its people from injury.

On the banks of the Danube the Russians still maintained their positions only at the price of heavy losses. They were a second time defeated at Oltenitza, and experienced other reverses in skirmishes and petty engagements. They were also repulsed in an attack on the Turkish camp near Giurgevo, and lost 2,000 men in killed and wounded, besides a great number who were taken prisoners. These actions led to a retreat of the Russians from Wallachia, and their retirement, by forced marches, into Moldavia. It was conjectured, however, that this movement was partly for the purpose of withdrawing the Russian troops from the neighbourhood of Austria, and also that the czar might concentrate his forces so as to use them on any point attacked by the troops of France and England. When Nicholas read the confidential report sent him by Prince Gortschakoff, he is said to have observed—"I can comprehend that my army was repulsed from Silistria, though I had expected another account from the Prince of Warsaw; but what I cannot understand is, that a wild horde of half-naked Turks, after an engagement on the water, and having taken our fortified islands by storm, should have dislodged my troops, with such a heavy loss, from a position which they had been a whole year fortifying." On the 2nd of August the Russians commenced their retrograde passage of the Pruth, and on the 13th of the same month, an imperial order of the day was read to the Russian soldiers assembled at Odessa, stating that the czar had ordered his troops to retire from the Danubian provinces, and to march where the danger was more imminent. At the same time Austria marched her troops into Moldavia and Wallachia, having obtained the permission of the Porte to do so, under the

pretence of shielding them from the return of Russian invasion. Her real motive, which it is now supposed was secretly understood by the cabinet of St. Petersburg, was to protect the retiring Russians from the advance of Omar Pasha and his successful Turks.

Some attempts were made at this time to renew diplomatic efforts to settle the dispute between Russia and the other great powers of Europe; but it necessarily failed; for England and France had not yet humbled the czar; the checks he had received had come from the swarthy hands of the Turks. Count Nesselrode, in forwarding the rejection by Nicholas of the terms offered him, observed, that their acceptance would lead it to be supposed that Russia was reduced by war to the last degree of exhaustion. He added—"The emperor has directed his general-in-chief to repass the Pruth with his troops, from strategic motives; and Russia will keep herself upon the defensive, within her frontiers, until more equitable conditions are offered to her. The emperor, on his side, will avoid increasing the complications of the war; but he will repel, with the greatest energy, all attacks against him, from whatever quarter they may proceed."

An insurrection, which had taken place amongst the Greek subjects of the sultan, and fostered by the emperor Nicholas and king Otho, terminated during September, in consequence of the decided measures taken by the western powers.

The campaign in Asia had been extremely adverse to the Turks, whose army, in that direction, had been reduced to a mere military rabble. The indolent pashas deceived the sultan, plundered the troops, and left the result to fate. An English observer remarked—"The profligacy of all ranks of officers is such, that even men of the world, who make no pretences to morality, are disgusted and repelled." The Turks were defeated near Gumri; and suffered other reverses so severe, that it is a wonder their army did not break up in confusion. The campaign terminated with the descent of Schamyl and a body of horsemen on Georgia, where they destroyed 200 villages, and, penetrating to Tiflis, carried off some Russian ladies of rank as hostages.



## CHAPTER LXII.

FIRST NIGHT IN THE CRIMEA; ADVANCE OF THE ALLIED ARMIES; BATTLE OF THE ALMA; DEATH OF MARSHAL ST. ARNAUD; THE BRITISH TAKE BALAKLAVA AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS; FIRST GREAT BOMBARDMENT OF SEBASTOPOL; ITS FAILURE; RUSSIAN ATTACK ON BALAKLAVA, AND CAVALRY ENGAGEMENT THERE; THE LIGHT CAVALRY CHARGE; THE SIEGE DOES NOT PROGRESS; BATTLE OF INKERMANN; ITS RESULTS; A TERRIBLE STORM PASSES OVER THE FLEETS AND CAMPS, AND PRODUCES GREAT DEVASTATION.

WE left the allied army, composed of English, French, and Turks, and consisting of 60,000 men, on the spot where they landed on the Crimea on the 14th of September, and the two days following.

The first night passed on the Crimea was one of trial to the allied troops, for the rain fell incessantly, and the wind blew in cold gusts, increasing in violence as the night proceeded. No tents had been landed; no fires could be lit; and the soldiers had to wrap themselves in their blankets, and sleep on the soddened earth as best they might. Sir George Brown passed the night under a cart tilted over, and the Duke of Cambridge had a similar slender accommodation. The next day brought a great increase of sickness amongst the English troops; several cases of cholera occurred; and one officer died after a few hours' illness. The French and the Turks had managed better, having contrived to land their tents on the first day of disembarkation.

The landing extended over the 14th, 15th, and 16th of September; and on the 18th, Lord Raglan issued orders that the troops should be ready to march at day-break. During the first day's march no opposition was encountered; but towards the evening, regiments of Russian cavalry were discerned in the distance; and before nightfall, a brief skirmish took place between a part of the Earl of Cardigan's brigade of light cavalry, and a body of Cossacks and Russian dragoons.

On the memorable 20th of September, the allies advanced upon the little river Alma. The banks of this stream are steep, and completely commanded by a mass of surrounding heights. Upon them the Russian army, consisting of from 45,000 to 50,000 men, was posted, under the command of Prince Mentschikoff, who is understood to have considered this to be the strongest position afforded by the country on the line of march. He had added to its natural capabilities, by erecting batteries

upon all the heights. The battle commenced about half-past one. The plan of operations decided on was, that the French should commence the assault on the right of the Russians, and turn their flank, capturing the battery and a strong stone breastwork, which defended the enemy on that side. They were then to push forward, and, if possible, cut off the retreat from Sebastopol. The English were to force the position on the hills in front, at the point of the bayonet.

The French, led by General Bosquet, crossed the river, and carried the heights on the right with a wonderful rapidity, to the cry of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" On gaining the crest of the height, they formed and advanced steadily amidst the storm of fire to which they were subjected, and in the teeth of the cavalry and infantry of the enemy. About three o'clock the Russian flank was turned, and the Zouaves had erected their flag on the most conspicuous position in the field.

In the meantime the English advanced towards the valley of the Alma, rising above which were the lines and redoubts of the enemy. On their approach, the Russians set fire to the village of Bouliouk, and to heaps of dried dung, which they had collected to add to the conflagration. Almost instantly there was a continuous blaze for 300 yards, and the valley was enveloped in smoke, which blew right in the faces of our men. Under the cover of this, the Russians opened a tremendous fire from their earthwork batteries, which committed a terrible havoc among our men. It was replied to by the English artillery, with a fierce fire of shot, shell, and rockets; and the command was given to advance. The men rushed across the stream amidst a storm of bullets, and then dashed through the smoking village, and some vineyards beyond it. Here they formed a line, advanced resolutely up the hills, and stormed the heaviest battery. Once they were driven



back; but they were rallied by Sir George Brown and the Duke of Cambridge, and again pressed forward. An enormous mass of Russian infantry, who approached to defend the battery, was broken and put to flight by the well-directed fire of a couple of pieces of artillery which were brought to bear upon them. The final possession of the redoubt was secured by a brilliant advance of the brigade of foot-guards.

At four o'clock, the English charged in three divisions up the heights. The guards and highlanders—the latter led by the brave Sir Colin Campbell—advanced with fixed bayonets against the charging Russians. The latter hesitated; and the guards and highlanders, uttering a loud English cheer and a fierce yell, dashed forward. The startled Russians dared not meet the shock, but turned and fled. Successive deadly volleys pursued them, and our artillery literally mowed them down as they dashed madly up the hill. The French having defeated the Russian left wing, were turning them on their right; the second British division were advancing to our left; when the Russian artillery, utterly routed, abandoned their position and galloped off. Such of the Russians as resisted perished, but the greater part fled in disorder. By five o'clock, the allied armies were in possession of the strong position which the Russians had occupied in the morning, and the latter were scattered in every direction. If the allies had possessed a sufficient amount of cavalry to pursue and cut down the fugitives, it is conjectured that the army of Prince Mentschikoff would have been annihilated. Thus was won the brilliant victory of the Alma; and in three hours and a-half, a position was wrested from the Russian troops which their general boasted that he could hold for at least three weeks. The Russians left three guns, 700 prisoners, and 4,000 wounded behind them; their loss was estimated at between five and six thousand. That of the English amounted to 2,196 killed and wounded; that of our gallant allies, the French, to about 1,400. The Turks, though eager to join in the battle, were not engaged.

Lord Raglan, in his despatch to the Duke of Newcastle (the English minister of war), thus alluded to the efforts of the French during the day:—"I will not attempt to describe the movements of the French army—that will be done by an able hand; but it is due to them to say, that

their operations were eminently successful; and that, under the guidance of their distinguished commander, Marshal St. Arnaud, they manifested the utmost gallantry, the greatest ardour for the attack, and the high military qualities for which they are so famed." The French general, on his part, thus spoke of his allies:—"On our left, the English met with large masses of the enemy, and with great difficulties; but everything was surmounted. The English attacked the Russian positions in admirable order, under the fire of their cannon—carried them, and drove off the enemy. The bravery of Lord Raglan rivals that of antiquity. In the midst of cannon and musket-shot, he displayed a calmness which never left him."

In another despatch by Marshal St. Arnaud, he alluded to his severe suffering from ill-health, and then observed—"All this does not prevent my remaining twelve hours on horseback on the day of the battle: but will not my strength betray me?" His words were prophetic: he had long suffered from an affection of the heart; and he had accepted the command of the army in the East with a wish to devote the brief remainder of his life in the service of his country. On the 25th of September, feeling the approach of death, he resigned the command of the army to General Canrobert, and expired on the 29th, in the fifty-third year of his age. His body was conveyed to France, and buried with great military pomp in Paris, in the chapel of the Invalides.

The news of the victory at Alma was received with enthusiastic joy in England. It was speedily followed by a false report that Sebastopol had fallen into the hands of the allies; the general belief of which added to the painful disappointment which was felt in consequence of its long and obstinate defence.

On the 21st and 22nd of September, the allies were engaged in collecting their wounded and burying their dead. On the morning of the 23rd they left the heights of Alma, and commenced their march towards the river Katcha, in the direction of Sebastopol. On the 26th, the English took possession of the town and harbour of Balaklava, as a base of operations. The harbour of Balaklava is about three-quarters of a mile long, and from 350 to 400 yards wide. It is completely land-locked; for, towards the sea, the cliffs close up and



overlap the narrow channel which leads to the haven, so that the latter is quite invisible. The French took possession of Strelitzka Bay as their base of operations, and occupied the left of the English position.

Preparations were made for the siege of Sebastopol, across the mouth of the harbour of which the Russians had themselves sunk seven of their ships of war; a mean expedient, further to obstruct the allies in any attempt they might make to enter. On the 28th of September, the second, third, and fourth divisions of the British army moved up to the heights above Sebastopol, and encamped there. The first division remained behind the port of Balaklava, for the protection of that important post.

If, after the battle of the Alma, the allies had at once pushed forward and commenced their operations against Sebastopol, it is conjectured that the place might have been taken by a sudden and daring assault. The Russians themselves expected such a movement, and were very imperfectly prepared to resist it. But the movements of the allies were slow, and much valuable time was lost. They did not commence digging their trenches until the evening of the 10th of October. This, as perhaps most of our readers are aware, is an operation necessary before any body of troops can be established in a protected position within a certain distance of the place to be attacked. In the meantime, the Russians, under the direction of the afterwards famous General Todleben, worked with an almost incredible industry at their defences, and threw up formidable works around Sebastopol with remarkable rapidity.

It was at length definitively arranged by the allies, that the siege of Sebastopol should commence on the 17th of October; and minute directions were issued the night before, as to the manner in which it should be conducted. Orders were also communicated to the fleet to be ready for action at eight in the morning. Tuesday (the 17th) dawned heavily, a thick mist or fog resting over the valley. Towards six it began to disperse, and shortly afterwards the sunbeams glittered through the gloom, and the mist rolled off in the direction of the sea. At half-past six, the French and English batteries roared forth simultaneously, and shot and shell whistled and screamed through the air until the earth seemed to tremble with the reverberation. The Russians received the fire with a calm

resolution, and returned it with a terrible promptitude. A spectator of the scene observed—"The first volley showed us what no soul in either army had hitherto been certain about—namely, the precise nature both of our works and the enemy's; and I am sorry to say, it also showed us that, even in earthwork batteries, *thrown up since we came here*, the Russians immensely outnumbered the allied lines. Not only were there extensive intrenchments, mounting twenty and thirty heavy cannon, but on every height and ridge, guns of heavy calibre were placed in battery. I have been informed, that the extensive nature of their works completely astonished our generals."

In the course of the morning the Russian fire caused the explosion of a French magazine, containing some tons of powder—an accident which killed or wounded about fifty men. About half-past one a second and more serious accident of the same kind took place. A Russian shell fell and exploded full upon the reserve magazine of the principal French battery, which instantly blew up with an awful shock. About twenty tons of powder, with shells and rockets in proportion, were ignited. The greatest part of the battery, together with sixteen guns, and nearly all the unfortunate artillerymen, were hurled into the air. This circumstance paralysed the efforts of the French for the day. The English and the allied vessels carried on the cannonade with unmitigated fury until night, when it ceased. The French had lost about 200 men, chiefly by the explosions; the English about 100. The loss to the allied fleets, which had contributed to the cannonade, was 16 killed and 200 wounded in the French ships, and 46 killed and 250 wounded in the English. "At dark all the ships returned to their anchorage. The change was magical—from a hot sun, mist, smoke, explosions, shot, shell, rockets, and the roar of 10,000 guns, to a still, cool, brilliant starlight sky, looking down upon a glassy sea, reflecting in long tremulous lines the lights at the mast-heads of the ships returning amid profound silence."\*

What was the *result* of this terrible bombardment of Sebastopol? It was, in fact, so trivial as to be unappreciable; and a strong conviction prevailed in the ranks of the allied armies, that the fame of that great fortress for adamant strength, and almost

\* Letter of Mr. William Russell, the *Times'* correspondent.





THE  
GRAND DUKE  
CONSTANTINE









LIBRARY OF  
CALIFORNIA







fabulous resources, had not been unjustly acquired. The forts by the sea, against which the fleets of the allies had poured such fierce storms of shot, exhibited a spotted appearance; but there they stood intact, while many of the ships were seriously injured. In a word, this first great cannonade was an entire failure!

On the 18th the Russian and English batteries recommenced their fire; but the French were unable to resume until the following day. The cannonade then was carried on day after day, though by no means in so vigorous or sustained a manner as on the first day of the siege. The Russians always returned the fire with great readiness, and seemed sometimes as if they would establish a superiority over that of the allies. In fact, the operations of this remarkable enterprise resembled those of field-service generally, rather than those of ordinary sieges. The place, so far from being completely invested, was perfectly open on the north side; and the garrison, therefore, had free communication with the surrounding country. There was, moreover, a relieving army at hand, in addition to the garrison; and it was evident that the forces of both, owing to the incompleteness of the investment, might be combined for any operation either of attack or defence.

The Russians, in fact, soon assumed an offensive attitude. On the 25th of October, a body of Russian infantry, consisting of 20,000 men, and supported by masses of cavalry, cautiously approached the English position in front of Balaklava; which, it will be remembered, was at some distance from the lines of the besiegers. The object of the Russians was to seize Balaklava, burn the shipping in the port, cut off our communication with the sea, and establish themselves in our rear.

To defend Balaklava, a body of marines and sailors, with some heavy guns, had been placed on the heights above the town and landing-place, the road to which was occupied by the 93rd highlanders, under Sir Colin Campbell. Beyond these were four redoubts, the care of which was confided to the Turks, 250 of whom were placed in each. They appear to have been stationed in this post of danger in consequence of the reputation their countrymen had obtained for the obstinate and heroic defence of Silistria, and on account of the general belief that Turks would fight behind stone walls or earthworks to the last gasp. Early

on the morning of the 25th, the Russian force of which we have spoken, under the command of General Liprandi, approached Balaklava. The handful of Turks in the four redoubts were seized with panic; their artillery was fired so hurriedly, that the shots all struck the earth before the Russians. No attempt was made to improve the range; a few rounds were fired without effect; and the Turks, finding the Russians close upon them, deserted the redoubts one after the other, and fled for protection behind the highlanders. The four redoubts were soon in the hands of the assailants.

Sir Colin Campbell formed his highlanders in order, and drew them back behind the crest of the hill. The British cavalry lay to the left of the highlanders; and, on hearing the roar of cannon, the two brigades, light and heavy, got into order in columns of squadrons, under the directions of the Earl of Lucan and Lord Cardigan. The sailors on the heights fired on the Russian cavalry; but the distance was too great for shot to tell upon them. On came the Russian cavalry, and made a dashing charge against the highlanders. At the distance of 600 yards the latter fired, but without effect. The Russian horse dashed onward, and were within 150 yards of the steady line of Scots. Then the highlanders discharged another volley, which, from its nearness and steadiness, carried death and terror amongst their foes. The Russian cavalry wheeled about, opened its files right and left, and fled back faster than it had advanced.

Another body of Russian horse advanced at this moment against our own cavalry, or rather against the heavy brigade under Brigadier-general Scarlett. The first line of the Russians was double the length of ours, and three times as deep: confident of victory, they looked proudly, as if they despised the enemy with whom they were so speedily to be engaged in mortal strife. The trumpets gave the signal, and the Scots Greys and Enniskilleners dashed at the centre of the Russian cavalry. They disappeared in the midst of the shaken and quivering columns of Russians through which they cut their way, and were soon seen dashing onward against the second line. It was a terrible moment; but another body of our cavalry rushed at the remnants of the first line of the enemy, and, dashing through it, put it to utter rout. In less than five minutes the Russian horse was



flying with all its speed before a force not half its strength. The loss of the British, in this gallant engagement, was very slight.

This affair was followed by another, in which the gallantry of our men was more apparent than the discretion of their leading officers. Some guns, taken in the redoubts, remained in the possession of the Russians; and Lord Raglan sent an order to Lord Lucan, to prevent the enemy from carrying them off if practicable. This order was indistinctly expressed, and not understood. Lord Lucan inquired of Captain Nolan (who brought it) its precise meaning. "There is the enemy," replied that officer, "and there are the guns, sir, before them; it is your duty to take them." He pointed into the centre of the Russian position, where stood solid divisions of cavalry and infantry, defended by thirty cannon drawn up along their line. To attack an army in such a position with a single regiment, was an act of madness. Lord Lucan reluctantly transmitted the order to Lord Cardigan, who, after remonstrating against its imprudence, prepared to obey it. The light cavalry brigade numbered 607 sabres; and these charged direct in the mouths of the thirty guns which defended the Russian position. In addition to this, our poor fellows were exposed to an oblique fire from the batteries on the hills on both sides, as well as to a direct fire of musketry. Still they rode up to the guns, dashed between them, cutting down the gunners as they stood, and then returned (their retreat covered by the heavy dragoons and the *chasseurs d'Afrique*), with a loss of more than 300 men in killed and wounded, as well as the loss of 335 horses. They were totally unsupported; the charge was useless; and the only wonder is, that a single man returned. Captain Nolan, to whose impetuosity the misfortune was attributed, joined in the charge, and was killed by the fragment of a shell, which struck him on the chest. The redoubts in advance of Balaklava were eventually retaken, but not the guns by which they were defended. A Russian officer afterwards expressed an opinion to an English one, that our cavalry attack on the 25th was a "*charge des fous*."

The Russians, encouraged by the fact of having captured some English cannon, made a sortie the next day (October 26th) from Sebastopol, with a body of troops variously reported as consisting of from

4,000 to 9,000 men, attended by a numerous artillery, and attacked the left of the British second division, under the command of Sir De Lacy Evans. They were received by a fire of artillery, which did great execution, and threw them into confusion. Speedily put to flight, they were chased almost to the walls of Sebastopol. Their loss, in killed and wounded, was estimated at between five and six hundred.

The little town of Eupatoria, on the Crimean coast, had been taken possession of and garrisoned by the English at the time when the allies first landed. Earthworks were thrown up around the town; and subsequently, one English, one French, and two Turkish men-of-war were sent to assist in its defence. It was not to be supposed that the Russians would suffer the allies to hold Eupatoria without a struggle, and an attack upon it was constantly expected. This took place on the 11th of October, by a body of 600 cavalry, attended by four guns, with which they commenced a fire of shot and shell upon the town. Finding that the latter was not as unprepared as they seem to have anticipated, the Russians retired after some desultory fighting. Other attacks, on the 15th and on the 19th of the same month, ended in a similar way.

The siege of Sebastopol went on without advancing, and it seemed as if the stores of warlike material within its fortresses were inexhaustible. The allies were disheartened, or, at the least, seriously disappointed; and their firing, though continued, was rather feeble. It was reckoned that, at this period, the Russians fired two shots to every one fired by their assailants, in which case the relative positions of the contending armies might be said to be reversed; for the allies were rather besieged in their intrenched camps, than the Russians within Sebastopol. Moreover, winter was rapidly setting in; the nights were bitterly cold; and the troops, who still lived under canvas, suffered severely from the damp and the piercing winds. Much sickness prevailed in the English army; and the poor Turks, who were cruelly neglected, died in swarms from cold, want, and fever. As to the harassed French and English, they were almost worn-out with exertions that did not appear to promise any corresponding results.

The Russians were well informed as to the state of their foes. Not only did they



receive intelligence from deserters, but the audacity of their spies was remarkable. One of them, disguised as a French officer, sauntered into the English lines, entered into conversation with those whom he met, smoked, talked, and laughed, and eventually got into a discussion as to the strength or weakness of our position in the rear towards Balaklava. An English officer, at length, struck by the strange accent and curious idiom of the supposed Frenchman, suspected his real nationality and avocation. Not liking to seize the man, lest he might be insulting a brave ally, he sent a messenger to convey his suspicions to Sir Colin Campbell. The stranger observed the movement, and gradually drew off from our lines towards the valley, but in so unembarrassed and natural a way, as to perplex those to whom the officer had communicated his misgivings. Shortly afterwards he quickened his pace into a run, and actually got away into the Russian lines, leaving his late companions staring after him in astonishment.

This circumstance ought still further to have sharpened the vigilance of the allies. The enemy were, in fact, making preparations for a tremendous and decisive blow, which they trusted would have the effect of crushing the invaders on their soil, or sweeping them back into the sea. On the 4th of November, the Russian army to the rear of the allies received enormous reinforcements from Bessarabia. These reinforcements, under the command of General Dannenberg and the Grand-dukes Michael and Nicholas, are said to have amounted to 45,000 men. They were brought to the Crimea in carts and waggons, with singular rapidity; and their arrival increased the number of the Russian army in our *rear* to about 70,000 men. On the evening of the 4th an imposing religious celebration took place in the Russian camp. A mass was chanted, and the troops were addressed by a bishop, who had arrived with the grand-dukes. In the name of the emperor he promised great rewards to the soldiers, in the event of their being successful in the effort in which they were about to be engaged, and called upon the God of armies to bless them. A quantity of spirits was then given to each man; and thus intoxicated both in mind and body, the Russians were kept ready for the attack.

It rained incessantly during the night, and towards morning a heavy fog settled

upon the heights and valley of the Inkermann. About five in the morning of the 5th, the pickets of the light division were driven in by the advancing Russians, who were stealthily approaching the English camp. The struggle began about seven, when our troops were subjected to a tremendous fire from a near yet unseen enemy. The battle of Inkermann was one that almost defies, or rather eludes, description. The darkness which prevailed, and the woody nature of the ground on which it was fought, rendered it almost impossible, even for those who were spectators, to render a clear account of it. For three hours 8,000 British infantry contended against the masses of Russians which were hurled against them, the rest being engaged in the siege-works. Lord Raglan was soon on the spot; and, together with his staff, took his position on a knoll of ground, in the hope of getting a glimpse of the battle which was raging beneath them. It was not one which admitted of the exercise of much generalship, and has been emphatically called "the soldiers' battle;" it being one in which the issue was left to the courage and muscular strength of the men. "Our generals could not see where to go to. They could not tell where the enemy were; from what side they were coming, nor where they were coming to. In darkness, gloom, and rain, they had to lead our lines through thick scrubby bushes and thorny brakes, which broke our ranks and irritated the men; while every pace was marked by a corpse or man wounded by an enemy, whose position was only indicated by the rattle of musketry and the rush of ball and shell."\*

It soon became evident that the Russians had received orders to fire at all mounted officers. Sir George Cathcart, while cheering on his men, received a bullet in the forehead, and fell dead. Three other generals—Strangways, Goldie, and Torrens—were killed; and four others—Brown, Bentinck, Buller, and Adams—wounded. The English were several times driven back, and were in imminent danger of being overwhelmed and crushed beneath the number and weight of their assailants. The guards were broken; they had lost fourteen officers, and left half their number on the ground. Mr. Russell, in his animated word-picture of this unequal strife, observes—"The Russians advanced mass

\* Russell.



after mass of infantry. As fast as one column was broken and repulsed, another took its place. For three long hours about 8,500 British infantry contended against at least four times their number. No wonder that, at times, they were compelled to retire. But they came to the charge again. The admirable devotion of the officers, who knew that they were special objects of attack, can never be too highly praised. Nor can the courage and steadiness of the few men who were left to follow them in this sanguinary assault on the enemy, be sufficiently admired. At one time the Russians succeeded in getting up close to the guns of Captain Wodehouse's and of Captain Turner's batteries in the gloom of the morning. Uncertain whether they were friends or foes, our artillerymen hesitated to fire. The Russians charged them suddenly, bore all resistance down before them, drove away or bayoneted the gunners, and succeeded in spiking some of the guns. Their columns gained the hill, and for a few moments the fate of the day trembled in the balance; but Adams's brigade, Pennefather's brigade, and the light division, made another desperate charge; while Dickson's guns swept their columns; and the guards, with undiminished valour and steadiness, though with a sadly decreased front, pushed on again to meet their bitter enemies. The rolling of musketry, the crash of steel, the pounding of the guns, were deafening; and the Russians, as they charged up the heights, yelled like demons. They advanced, halted, advanced again, received and returned a close and deadly fire; but the *Minie* is the king of weapons—Inkermann proved it. The regiments of the fourth division and the marines, armed with the old and much-belauded Brown Bess, could do nothing, with their thin line of fire, against the massive multitudes of the Muscovite infantry; but the volleys of the *Minie* cleft them like the hand of the destroying angel, and they fell like leaves in autumn before them."

About ten o'clock, the hard-pressed English were relieved by the arrival of a body of 6,000 French. They consisted of Zouaves and a battalion of *chasseurs indigènes*—the Arab sepoy of Algiers. Their trumpets sounded above the din of battle, and the Zouaves were described as rushing to the charge with "the light of battle on their faces." Cheered by this assistance, the English fought with fresh vigour, and the

Russians soon began to yield to the attacks of the French and to the artillery, which now played with deadly effect upon them. By twelve o'clock the Russians were driven down the hill towards the valley, and sullenly retired, protected by their artillery. As they were not pursued, they again advanced their guns, and opened a tremendous fire; but the renewed assault was admirably repulsed by the French, and again the Russians retired.

The enemy was baffled, and we may fairly say, defeated. They had entirely failed in their attempt to crush the English troops in this direction, and thus greatly accelerate the termination of the struggle. Yet the battle of Inkermann, though a glorious contest both to English and French, was scarcely a victory. The Russians were rather repulsed with heavy losses than defeated; they failed, but retired in good order. Had they renewed the battle of Inkermann a second or a third time, it is difficult to say that they would not have accomplished their object of annihilating the small number of troops, enfeebled as they were by sickness, who could be spared from the defence of the trenches and the work of the siege, to oppose them. Our troops were lamentably insufficient in number to execute the amount of labour which the indiscretion of Lord Raglan permitted to be heaped upon them. He had undertaken too much; and incessant labour in the trenches was sending our men by hundreds to the hospital or the grave.

It was a proud thing to say, that an army of not more than 8,000 English and 6,000 French, arrested the progress of the massive Russian columns, hewed them down by sheer strength of muscle and adamant resolution, and finally swept them back disappointed of their prey. But to the allies the result was *glory*, and not *gain*. It inflicted on each—but especially on the English—losses they were not in a condition to sustain without serious apprehensions as to the future. The total loss of the English, on this day, amounted to 2,612 men; consisting of 462 killed, 1,952 wounded, and 198 missing. The heavy proportion of generals and officers was also severely felt; 43 being killed, and 102 wounded. The loss of the French, notwithstanding the comparatively brief time they were engaged in the battle, reached, in killed and wounded, the number



of 1,726. That of the Russians was far heavier, being variously estimated at from 10,000 to 15,000 men; of whom nearly 5,000 were left dead on the field.

The news of the battle of Inkermann was received in England with mingled emotions of sorrow and of pride; sorrow for the heavy loss the nation had sustained, and pride for the heroism of its troops. A sense of uncertainty and uneasiness began to prevail throughout the country. It was evident that the English government had fallen into the common error of underrating the strength and military resources of the enemy; and the result was, that our position was rather one of defence than of aggression. For a time the siege was at a standstill, and neither the allies nor the Russians were in a condition to continue the struggle with activity. The cry from the seat of war was—"Help us, or we are overwhelmed!" and both England and France responded to the demand for more men. In the British army at Sebastopol, it was felt that one or two more such *victories* as that of the Inkermann would be their ruin; and it is said,\* that General Sir De Lacy Evans advised Lord Raglan to embark the English army on board their ships, and abandon the cannon and trenches to the enemy. The general himself subsequently denied (in his place in the House of Commons) that this statement was correct; but admitted that he had said, "My lord, will you pardon me if I say that I think that, after the great loss we have sustained to-day, arrangements ought to be made for taking up some other position, rather than remaining exposed to the risk of greater reinforcements coming in to carry our present position?"

Her majesty the Queen sent, through the Duke of Newcastle, her warm thanks and earnest encouragement to the troops before Sebastopol, who had fought so bravely, and who suffered so patiently. The despatch observed—"Proud of the victory won by her brave army, grateful to those who wear the laurels of this great conflict, the queen is painfully affected by the heavy loss which has been incurred, and deeply sensible of what is owing to the dead. Those illustrious men cannot, indeed, receive the thanks of their sovereign, which have so often cheered the soldier in his severest trials; but their blood has not been shed in vain. Laid low in their grave of victory, their names will be cherished for ever by a grateful country;

\* On the authority of Lord Claud Hamilton.

and posterity will look upon the list of officers who have fallen, as a proof of the ardent courage and zeal with which they pointed out the path of honour to no less willing followers." The emperor of the French, also, sent a similar congratulatory and sympathetic address to his army in the East.

It seemed as if the allies were to experience almost every variety of disaster during their siege of the terrible fortress of Sebastopol. Sickness, pestilence, battle, surprises, want of the necessaries and decencies of life; continual exposure to the bitterness of the weather, including cold, wet, and slush; and, though last not least, the spirits of the men often broken by deferred hopes ending continually in disappointment.

Nine days after the battle of the Inkermann, a tremendous storm passed over the fleets and camps of the allies in the Crimea. The tempest first swept over Constantinople, where it caused much damage to the loftier buildings. It then roared over the surging sea, and drove our vessels upon the rocky shore of the Crimea. Strong ships were torn from their anchorage, and men were disabled and blinded by the furious wind. Thirty British and French vessels were wrecked, and half as many dismasted at Balaklava; and eighteen were wrecked or dismasted at the mouth of the Katcha. Some of the ships were literally dashed to pieces on the rocks. Amongst the wrecks was the *Prince*, a new vessel of 2,700 tons, which carried a cargo valued at £185,000, consisting of winter clothing for the troops, military stores, and medicines and comforts for the sick. All were lost: the *Prince* was beaten to pieces on the rocks; and of her unhappy crew of 150 men, only six were saved. At Eupatoria, the results of the storm were extremely disastrous: when the hurricane subsided, sixteen wrecks lay upon its sandy beach. Amongst these was the *Henri IV.*, a noble three-decker French line-of-battle ship. On land, the storm produced great destruction and some loss of life. At Balaklava, houses were unroofed, and, in the camps, tents were blown down. "The air was filled with blankets, hats, great-coats, little coats, and even tables and chairs! Macintoshes, quilts, Indian-rubber tubs, bed-clothes, sheets of tent canvas, went whirling, like leaves in a gale, towards Sebastopol. The shingle roofs of the out-houses were torn away and scattered over the camp, and a portion of the roof of Lord



Raglan's house was carried off to join them. The barns and commissariat sheds were laid bare at once. As instances of the force of the wind, I may mention, that large arabas, or waggons, which stood close to us, were overturned; that men and horses were knocked down and rolled over and over; that the ambulance waggons were turned topsy-turvy; and that a large and heavy table in Captain Chetwode's tent was lifted

off the ground, whirled round and round, till the leaf flew off, and then came to mother earth deprived of a leg and seriously injured. The marines and rifles on the cliffs over Balaklava lost tents, clothes, everything; the storm tore them away over the face of the rock, and hurled them across the bay, and the men had to cling to the earth with all their might to avoid the same fate."\*

### CHAPTER LXIII.

MISERABLE STATE OF OUR TROOPS BEFORE SEBASTOPOL; EQUIVOCATING CONDUCT OF AUSTRIA; INCESSANT EXERTIONS OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS; VICTOR EMMANUEL JOINS IN THE WAR AGAINST RUSSIA; BATTLE OF EUPATORIA; DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS; ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER.

For some time after the battle of Inkermann, the allies before Sebastopol rather suffered and endured, than made any progress in the work of the siege. Skirmishes were of frequent occurrence; but they were attended with results which, in so vast a struggle, could not be called important. The privations to which the English army especially was subjected, were of a painful and most heartrending character. Winter brought with it the miseries that must have been foreseen, but were not provided against. The trenches were often turned into dykes; the tents were frequently flooded; the promised wooden huts for the men were not provided; and the warm clothing necessary for their preservation in health, was equally neglected. To these miseries the frequent pangs of hunger were added. The filthy state of the track from Balaklava to the camp, sometimes nearly a foot deep in mud, rendered the passage of carts almost an impossibility. The storm of the 14th of November had also caused a deficiency of supplies, and the rations delivered to the soldiers were miserably reduced. Such little comforts as tea, coffee, or sugar, were frequently not issued at all for more than a week together. So far as the coffee was concerned, this mattered little, for the berry was actually given out in a *raw* state; and the poor soldiers, who had no means of roasting it, threw it away. The result of this state of

things may be imagined. The pinched and starving soldiers fell victims to sickness, and the dreaded cholera again broke out in their diminished ranks. It was a painful task to read the letters that arrived in England from the camp, and were published in the daily papers. One officer said of the men—"Their feet are never dry; some of them have no soles to their shoes, and no socks; others no shirts. I would defy any one who saw the regiments leave England, to recognise the careworn, half-starved skeletons of which they now consist. We are encamped on a clayey piece of ground, which is now mud up to the knees; and the tents are as wet within as on the outside."

While the soldiers of the allied armies were perishing before Sebastopol like rotten sheep, Austria entered (on the 2nd of December) into an equivocating treaty with France and England. It provided that, in case of war breaking out between Austria and Russia, the former country should be assisted by France and England; but Austria promised, that in the event of a general peace not being made within the year, she would *deliberate* upon the means necessary for obtaining it. The Prussian monarch, who was desired to join in this treaty, would not even bind himself to *deliberate*, as he had quite made up his mind to keep out of the war, under any circumstances whatever. He, however, endeavoured to open a negotiation for the settlement of the quarrel, but without any useful result.

\* Russell.



Just prior to the Christmas of 1854, the English nation felt that its affairs were in a critical condition, and misgivings of a serious character were experienced as to the state of our army in the Crimea, and the final result of the expedition. Still it was deemed better not to place difficulties in the way of the government, but to give it every chance of providing better for the army in future, and of winning, through that army, the success which England not only desired, but demanded. The imperfections of ministers at home, or of generals abroad, were overlooked in the more immediate desire of every one to bring the struggle to a successful termination.

During this period the emperor Nicholas was indefatigable in his exertions. A correspondent from St. Petersburg related, that "he (the emperor) devotes sixteen hours a-day to the transaction of business; the lists of those who have distinguished themselves by bravery, he goes through with the greatest care, and leaves no deserving case unrewarded. Count Nesselrode, who continues to enjoy his confidence, confers with him daily. On the 8th of December, the conclusion of the triple alliance had transpired in the upper circles of St. Petersburg, and caused not a little sensation there: but still the conviction was general, that Austria would never draw the sword against Russia. The emperor has made up his mind to a European war; he is conscious of his power, and omits nothing to secure and increase it. Though not disinclined to an honourable peace, he is ready to take up the gauntlet that Europe throws at his feet." This persevering and spasmodic energy on the part of Nicholas was the result of disease, of restless excitement, and of that nervous irritability ever produced by incessant agitation. The spirit of eternal retribution which permeates throughout nature, and visits the wrongdoer with the penalties of wrong, was slowly performing its inexorable task. The flashing of diseased energy gave a false and delusive strength to the man who was hurrying towards his sudden, dark, and irrevocable doom.

It is both painful and needless to dwell upon the harrowing sufferings of our troops before Sebastopol, during the winter of 1854-5. The men were a mass of dirt, rags, and misery, and appeared sunk in despondency. The work to which they were subjected was terrible; they had to

stand digging for twelve hours together in the trenches, over their ankles in mud and slush. Many died there from cramps in the stomach, or from the combined effects of wet, cold, want, and exhaustion. "Our encampment," observed an officer writing to England, "is one mass of graves and dead bodies of horses and cattle." At home, the most profound feeling of sympathy existed, and many efforts were made by the nation to alleviate the miseries of our suffering soldiers. The queen also wrote a womanly letter of commiseration, declaring that she thought, day and night, of her beloved troops.

Early in the January of 1855, the allies were joined by Victor Emmanuel, king of Sardinia, who expressed his intention of sending 15,000 men to the theatre of war, to share in the fatigues and honours of the struggle. As a return, France and England guaranteed the integrity of the Sardinian states, and engaged to defend them against any attack during the war. On the 5th of the same month, 10,000 Turks were landed at Eupatoria, being the first detachment of a numerous Ottoman army which shortly afterwards assembled at this spot. This was in consequence of a report that General Osten-Sacken would speedily commence hostilities against that place, with a force consisting of 40,000 troops and eighty guns.

At home, the Aberdeen ministry resigned, in consequence of the almost universal dissatisfaction of the country with the manner in which the war had been conducted; and Lord Palmerston became premier.

In the Crimea, military operations were, during the depth of winter, almost of necessity suspended. When the winter was half over, the authorities commenced the erection of wooden huts for the men, who had previously slept in sodden filth, and, consequently, perished like rotten sheep. The condition of the army was much alleviated; and the requisite clothing and comforts were supplied to the men, by persons who were sent out to distribute the subscriptions which a sympathetic people readily contributed. Our military hospitals at Scutari were reformed through a similar instrumentality. Amongst the schemes for benefiting our soldiers, was one which originated with Messrs. Peto and Betts, the eminent builders, who obtained the permission of government to construct a railway from Balaklava to the camp before Sebastopol, for the conveyance of stores,



shot, and ammunition; an expedient by which an enormous amount of labour was taken from the overworked soldiers.

On the 25th of January, 1855, the emperor Nicholas issued his last manifesto. In this document, he still asserted that his only object in the war was "that of defending the rights of our co-religionists, and, in general, of all the Christians in the East." It ordained the formation of a general militia of the empire; and with that assumed sanctity which has ever characterised its author, concluded—"May the Almighty, who reads every heart, who blesses pure intentions, grant us his assistance."

Shortly after the issue of this manifesto, a Russian force, consisting of 40,000 men, attacked the Turkish army at Eupatoria, under the command of Omar Pasha, and, after four hours' fighting, was repulsed with considerable loss. The attack took place at daybreak on the 17th of February; and after a cannonade of two hours' duration, the Russians made preparations for an assault on the north-east side of the town. The Turkish infantry appeared resolved on retrieving the military reputation their countrymen had in some degree tarnished at Balaklava. They stood like adamant, and repulsed the advancing Russians by a steady and deadly fire, directed right into their faces. A sortie of the Turks, made shortly afterwards, compelled the foe to retreat, though they did so in good order; a circumstance partially attributable to the fact, that the Turks were deficient in cavalry. The Russians left 453 men dead on the field.

Slight as was the defeat of the Russians at Eupatoria that is, in comparison with the great battles of Alma and of Inkermann—yet it has been conjectured, that, in some measure, it caused an event which startled Europe, and produced astonishment throughout Russia. We have referred to the failing health and the spasmodic industry of the emperor Nicholas. Calm and dignified as the great autocrat seemed to those around him—stern and unbending as was the front he bore towards his enemies—yet the terrible struggle on which he had entered, had secretly undermined his health, and was bearing him downward to the grave. Baffled ambition, and a humbled pride, gnawed like serpents at his heart; and beneath their venomous bites he writhed in secret, while he smothered the bitterness

that reigned within him, and presented outwardly the unruffled calm of aristocratic *hauteur* and majestic repose. On the evening of Friday, the 2nd of March, it was known in the great capitals of Europe that the emperor Nicholas was no more! A telegraphic despatch had scarcely informed the people of this country that he was seriously ill, when another arrived, bringing news of his death. At first the information was received with incredulity; but it was speedily confirmed. Anxiety and sickness had done their work; and the troubler of the peace of the world was a powerless, breathless thing, soon to return to the obscure dust from which he rose.

A suspicion at first arose that the emperor Nicholas had met the fate which had overtaken so many of his predecessors—namely, assassination. The surmise was natural; but it proved to be unfounded. Though his death was unexpected, he had been more than commonly ill for twelve days. The illness which caused, or rather immediately preceded, his death, was brought on by a cold. Notwithstanding the severity of a St. Petersburg winter, the emperor insisted on attending to his usual occupation. His anxiety for the success of the war into which he had rushed, induced him to inspect everything for himself, even to the most minute details. He visited the soldiers in their barracks; he frequently attended long reviews, forgetful of the precautions which his age required in such a climate and in such a season. To all the observations made to him by his family, and by his most devoted servants, he replied, that he had something else to do besides taking care of his health. He had, moreover, treated himself according to his own ideas, and had insisted on his physicians putting him on a regimen which would prevent his getting corpulent; a condition of which he had considerable dread.

But little was made public concerning the last illness, and the last hours, of the man who had played so important a part in the affairs of Europe. He appears not to have felt any compunctions with respect to the war into which he had plunged his country, but to have regarded his career with satisfaction; while, to the last, he spoke of religion as if he felt himself a saint, and his hopes of a happy future seemed to rest upon the vestibule of certainty.

On the 18th of February, the emperor



was so far ill, that his physician, Dr. Mandt, begged for permission to call in other assistance. Nicholas treated the matter lightly, but consented that the body-physician, Dr. Karell, should be consulted. By degrees the emperor became worse, from constant cough and want of sleep; and on the 22nd, his physicians begged him to keep his room. To this he would not consent; on which one of them said to him—"No medical man in the whole army would allow any soldier so unwell as your majesty is to leave the hospital; for he would be sure that his patient would soon come in again worse." The emperor answered—"You have done your duty, gentlemen, and I thank you; and now I will do mine!" and on this, he got into his sledge, and drove to the exercising-house to inspect the troops.

As might be expected, he returned home much worse, coughed violently, and expectorated incessantly. From that time he kept his room, or only went into his study. During this period, he lay merely on his camp bed, made of a casing of Russian leather filled with hay, and covered with a blanket and his cloak. Influenza was rapidly succeeded by fever and inflammation of the lungs; and paralysis of that organ was anticipated. On the evening of the 1st of March, the emperor's physicians despaired of his recovery; and at their request, the empress and the crown-prince begged him to take the sacrament. Not until this did he seem to recognise the danger of his state; but he received the suggestion with calmness. Shortly afterwards he took the sacrament, bade an eternal farewell to the empress, their children and grandchildren, and kissed and blessed each one with a firm voice. They then retired; only the empress and the Grand-duke Alexander remaining with him. For a time he lost his speech, and appeared engaged in silent prayer. Subsequently he regained his voice, and spoke occasionally up to the time of his death, which took place on the morning of the 2nd of March, in the fifty-ninth year of his age, after he had filled the imperial throne for nearly thirty years.

Whatever might have been the emotions with which the news of the death of Nicholas was regarded within his own empire, it created a scarcely concealed gladness throughout the rest of Europe. He had been the great—indeed the sole—cause of

a needless war, that had brought mourning to the hearths of thousands, and which many trusted would now be brought to a conclusion. The feeling manifested in this country may perhaps be correctly estimated by a perusal of the following extract from a discourse delivered on the occasion by a celebrated and eloquent nonconformist preacher:—"For one, he rejoiced with a joy unspeakable; with a sad, chastened, and a grim joy. With those who held the strange faith, that the death of Nicholas was one of God's judgments, he should not be able to go. The doctrine was a very dangerous one. What would we say, supposing death, instead of touching the St. Petersburg palace, had touched that of our sovereign, and the news came from St. Petersburg, that it was regarded as a judgment from God, because we had gone to war with Russia? Should not we have said, that they were interpreting an ordinary occurrence as a judgment? But though we cannot accept the death of Nicholas as a mere judicial stroke, according to the vulgar notion, there is a sense in which it is a judgment of God. If that man died worn out by passion, brought down by pride—if, upon his broad Atlantean shoulders, he would offer to bear a world—if he did raise civilisation against him—if he would bid all Russia rise in arms—if thereby he brought upon a mortal head cares too many, and filled the human heart with passions all too stout and strong—if, by lust, he inflamed his blood beyond endurance—if he took into his hand a sceptre too heavy, a sword too mighty—then his death was one of God's judgments; then was his doom the old one written on the wall by the fiery finger of God—"The wages of sin is death." The nations might meet in solemn inquest: laying out that proud tyrant, and asking why he fell, they might say for once, 'Died by the visitation of God.' Queen Mary said, that if she were opened, on her heart would be found written that word of shame, 'Calais.' Who knows, if Nicholas were opened, there would not be found written on his heart the name of that great SEBASTOPOL, which was founded as part of the gigantic conspiracy of which his ancestor was the arch-conspirator—that fortress whose very existence is iniquity, to connive at whose continuance is a wickedness—that cursed fortress, built for no other end than a place of vantage, from



which to stride, Colossus-like, over lands that never called for it—put there, as it had been, not to defend Russia, but as a robber's nest, from which to go forth to filch from nations that great gift of God which St. Paul so greatly gloried in—his liberty, freedom, Romanship, and rights. 'Died by the visitation of God,' indeed! Died because it is written, if men will tower so gigantically above their fellows, and take upon themselves duties so vast, responsibilities so awful, they do then but serve to teach one more lesson of how man's short span was never intended for such work. Why, to be such a man as this, they ought to have had the strength of Goliath, the intellect of all the great men of the world, the years of Methuselah, the stature of the sons of Anak. But here was a man like ourselves; a man who ate, and drank, and slept; a man who knew sorrow and suffering; a man with but threescore years and ten before him, and they, thanks to God, not granted to him; who undertook a work that was superhuman, who laid upon himself a burden that might have beggared Atlas to sustain. 'Died by the visitation of God,' indeed! Died because, being a mortal, he tried to make himself a god—died because, in shaking kingdoms, he shook himself into destruction. \* \* \* Had he used his gigantic power for the world's good—had he tried to be a modern Cadmus, opening to his Russia the ways of civilisation—had we heard, that day and night he strove to make his people a wise people—England would have had a tear for his fall; would have worn the true sackcloth, would have mourned in spiritual ashes, when it heard that a wise, good king had gone out. For this was the man in all history who had perhaps the most awful place in the world. Owner absolute of sixty millions of mankind—owning them body, soul, purse, house, lands, creed, conscience, in this world, and (as he arrogantly pretended) in the world that was to come. Think what had gone out! Pope, priest, ruler, soldier, and lawgiver. Think that there has fallen into nothingness a man whose dominions stretch from the North Pole far down into Asia—a man whose kingdom outweighs the globe. But now six feet of mother earth is all that he can call his own! He, before whose will sixty millions of craven slaves bowed but yesterday, is nought to-day. For in Russia it was as in England; the

rapid march of life says in one breath, 'The king is dead; God save the king!' One might say with Shakspeare—

"But yesterday, the word of Caesar might  
Have stood against the world; now lies he there,  
And none so poor to do him reverence.'

Though they would surround his bier with pomp, though heralds would ring out his titles—titles covered with shame and blood—they were merely doing so over one more corrupting mortal going to seek the worm which was already preparing to seek its new friend. There was something very awful in the thought, that one man's death should, as it were, rid the world of an incubus. It was sad beyond expression, that in that age it was possible for one man so to have weighed upon the whole world, that when he died the world should lift itself up, as if it could now breathe freely."

Leaving the florid language of oratory, which necessarily has more license than the stricter decisions of sober history, let us estimate the character of the emperor Nicholas in the way in which we think that work will be done by posterity; destitute alike of prejudice, excitement, or favour. Unhappily, with respect to him, truth sounds like censure, and every impartial opinion seems touched with bitterness. Of his personal appearance we have already spoken: \* it may be added, that few men ever more thoroughly *looked* the emperor. With a stature little short of gigantic, he combined a deportment military, dignified, and majestic. Proud of his personal gifts, he strove to display them to the utmost; and, by little arts almost rivalling those of the actor, to impress his subjects with a profound feeling of respect, or rather awe, when in his presence. Cold, reserved, and restrained, he did not add to his majestic appearance the fascination of alluring manners which his brother Alexander not unfrequently exercised. Nicholas practised austerity as an imperial adjunct. The Marquis Custine observed of him, when living—"It is easy to perceive that the emperor cannot for a single instant forget what he is, nor the constant attention which he excites: he studies attitude incessantly; from whence it results that he is never natural, not even when he is sincere. He has three expressions, not one of which is that of simple benevolence. The most habitual appears to be that of severity.

\* See *ante*, p. 474.









COUNT 002/072





LIBRARY OF  
CALIFORNIA







Another, though rarer expression, perhaps better suits his fine face; it is that of solemnity: a third is that of politeness, in which are mixed some shades of gentleness and grace, that serve to temper the chill produced by the two former. But notwithstanding this grace, there is still something which injures the moral influence of the man; it is, that each expression is assumed and cast off at will, without the least trace of one remaining to modify the one next adopted. For such change we are not prepared, and it therefore appears like a mask, that can be put on or off at pleasure."

This absence of natural manners, thus spoken of in the emperor, appears to us to have arisen from his hardness of character and want of heart. All the events of his reign show him to have been devoid of soft and tender feelings. Wrapped up in a chilling egotism, he was always acting history, and talking for posterity. His habits of deception were profound and constant; and though by blood more than half a German, by craft he was all a Russian. In fact, he prided himself on his nationality, and endeavoured to conform to the Russian character, rather than to improve that character. Taught that Russia was the first empire of the world, he aimed at being the most distinguished of Russian princes. Regarding himself as the rival of Peter the Great, he yet sought to reverse the labours of that illustrious reformer, who endeavoured to make Russia European, civilised, and liberal; while Nicholas strove to keep it Asiatic, semi-barbarous, despotic, and blind to all around it.

Nicholas was not without talents; but in this respect he has, we conceive, been greatly overrated. He legislated for the moment, and had not the power of glancing, as it were, into the political future. He saw the step he was taking, and he trod firmly; but he was blind to the one next to it. In the last and greatest event of his reign—the war with France, England, and Turkey—he had entirely miscalculated, and was so utterly mistaken, that the profound mortification resulting from his mistakes and his reverses accelerated his death, if indeed they did not cause it. The emperor was talented, but not original; and possessed of a strong *will* rather than of a powerful intellect. To compare him with Peter the Great is an insult to the memory of that illustrious man, without whom Russia would have been but as the China of Europe.

That it is the fashion with certain modern Russian and French writers to traduce him, does not take from his actual merits as a reformer. He produced a policy; Nicholas was merely the product of one: Peter possessed genius; Nicholas cleverness and industry: the first strove to advance, and to raise the brutal nobles and dull serfs of his time into a European people; the last desired Russia to stand still, to remain Russian, to continue Asiatic, docile, and slavish. Peter was tolerant of diversity of opinion, both in religious and other matters; Nicholas was bitterly intolerant of all dissent from orthodoxy in religion, and of all opinions whatever with respect to politics or social science. He recognised obedience—absolute, unquestioning, unrepining obedience—as the duty of every subject to his sovereign. His whole reign was a succession of repressive measures. Could he have carried his desires rigidly into execution, Russia must have remained stationary among the nations. In despotic states, even thought appears to have in it a democratic tendency; and Nicholas consequently strove to confine the thoughts of his people to mechanical matters, and to the discharge of the common duties of life. Nicholas, though bitterly intolerant of diversity of opinion with regard to religion, appears himself to have regarded it merely as an instrument of state-craft; as a sort of property to be used by princes to control their subjects and to deceive their neighbours. He had none of the romantic devotion or mystical religion which characterised Alexander. His was too cold a nature for that: the God he worshipped (or it would be more correct to say, acknowledged) was the *God of Russia*, whom he appeared to think, or at least affected to say, was especially devoted to his interests, and to those of his empire. This hard man never seems to have recognised any impiety or arrogant familiarity with Deity, in these coarsely pagan and materialistic ideas. He ever used religion as a cloak for aggression; and though his motives in the war of 1854-5 were too transparent to be mistaken—though his hypocrisy was again and again unveiled, he still protested with a sanctimonious solemnity, that his object was merely the promotion of Christianity, and that he had no design whatever upon Constantinople, or any other of the dominions of the sultan. Yet, though thus using religion himself, he was cruel in his intole-



rance towards all dissent from the national creed and formula. Many incidents which are related of the emperor's cruelty and intolerance with respect to religion we have omitted, as they appear to be told with an evident *animus* against him, and are not sanctioned by any perfectly satisfactory authority.

Regarding himself as the embodiment of the aristocratic principle, and the champion of legitimacy—or, in plain language, of despotism—Nicholas was naturally the ally of all tyrants, and the enemy of all oppressed nations who panted for freedom. All liberal principles he regarded as revolutionary, and, as such, to be trampled into the dust, or overthrown by forests of bayonets and storms of grapeshot. Industrious in all things, in this direction he exhibited a fearful activity. The nobility of Russia cowered before him; its emasculate press lay prostrate at his feet. The people of Russia dared not to possess opinions, or at least to utter them. The spy-system was universal; and those who most felt injustice, were frequently the last who presumed to complain. To do so, would have been to arraign the providence of Russia; or, in other words, the assumed justice of the czar. Surrounding nations looked towards Russia with suspicion and detestation; for they knew that the emperor was ready with his battalions to support the despotism of their rulers. The people of Prussia had feared this; those of Italy and Hungary had bitterly felt it. Distracted Poland, also, maddened by oppression, had been beaten prostrate by the relentless cruelty of this man, who, bitterly intolerant of all opposition to his will, felt no pity for the fallen, extended no mercy to those who pleaded for forgiveness. The

character of Nicholas is gilded by some natural powers, but not irradiated by one single virtue. Deeply and darkly selfish, he pondered so much on the fact of his greatness as an imperial prince, that he forgot the welfare of the numerous peoples whom he had been called to govern. In a word, he was the true type of a despot: he knew no limit to his lust for power; no mercy in his pursuit of it; no remorse for the crimes he had perpetrated to obtain it.

The death of the emperor Nicholas forms a natural termination of a history of the empire over which he ruled. We have therefore merely a few supplemental facts to mention. His eldest son succeeded him without opposition, and was crowned at Moscow, as Alexander II., on the 7th of September, 1856. Before that event occurred, the war had been brought to a termination. The Russians experienced several reverses; and, amongst them, sustained a thorough defeat on the 16th of August, 1855, at the hands of the French and Sardinians, at the river Tchernaya. The city and south side of Sebastopol were taken by the allies on the 8th of September; and the brilliancy of the retreat of the Russians from the blazing ruins, retrieved the honour of their military name from the disgrace which defeat might otherwise have inflicted upon it. Peace thus rendered practicable, was signed at Paris by the plenipotentiaries of the several powers concerned, on the 30th of March, 1856. These events, including the terms of peace, we have recorded at full in our *History of the War with Russia*, to which work we refer such of our readers as desire to become acquainted with details which do not properly come within the limits of the present volume.





THE RT HONBLE JOHN GEORGE LAMBTON, EARL OF DURHAM.

Durham

*Ambassador at the Court of Russia from 1825 to 1837.*

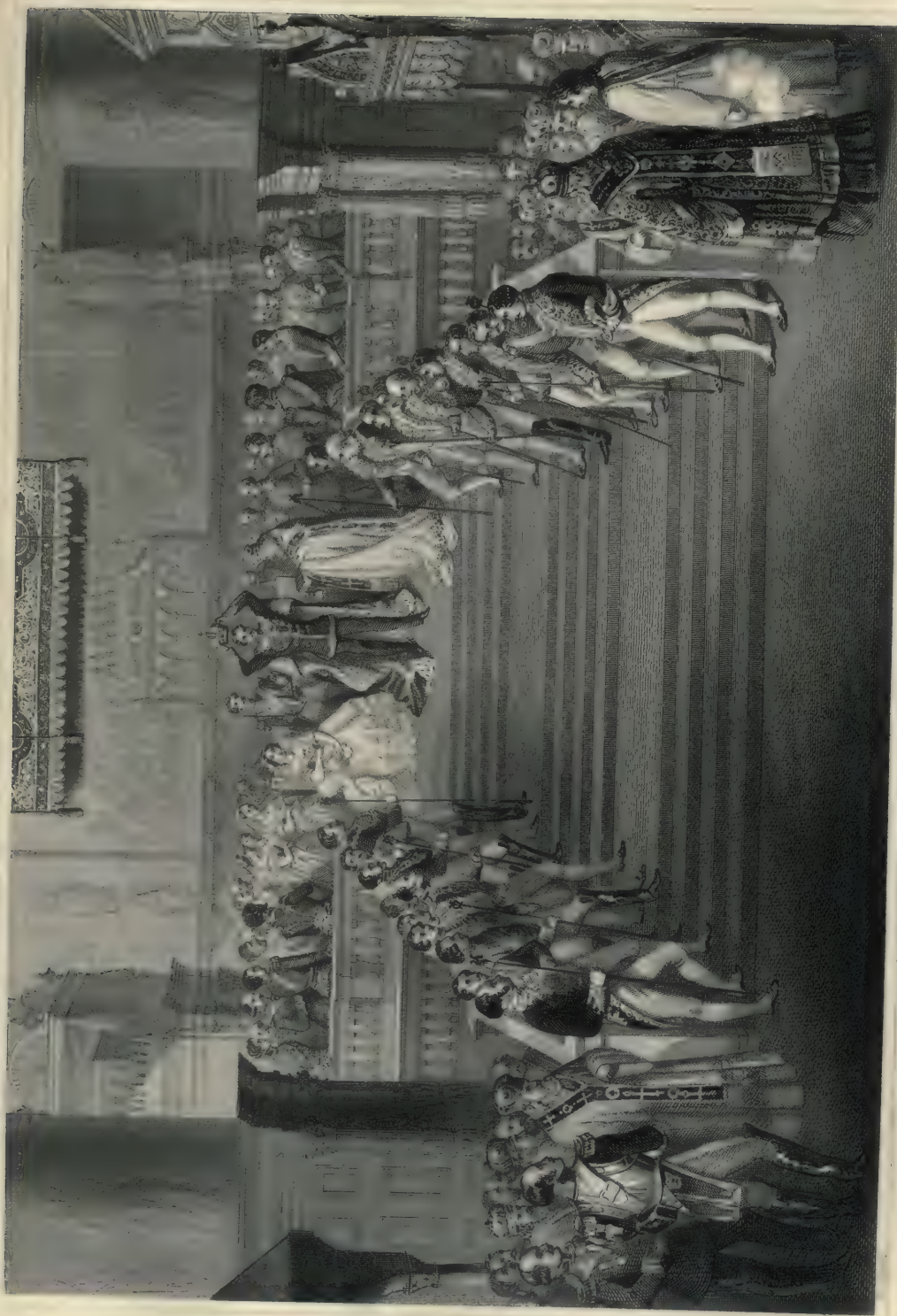
THE LONDON PRINTING AND PUBLISHING COMPANY LIMITED

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA









CORONATION OF ALEXANDER II. EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

See page 70.







## INDEX.

ALEXANDER, Prince of Novgorod, defeats the invaders of his territory, and receives the name of Nevski, in honour of a great victory which he obtains on the banks of the Neva, 39; retires from Novgorod, because his designs are opposed by his subjects, *ib.*; is recalled, and becomes again victorious over the enemies of the city, *ib.*; is summoned to appear at the Golden Horde, which confers on him the dignity of the grand-princedom, *ib.*; undertakes an expedition into Sweden, *ib.*; goes again to the Golden Horde, with the object of diverting the anger of the khan from the Russians, 40; expires suddenly on his return, *ib.*; his character and canonisation, 41.

Alexander I. is proclaimed emperor, 379; pacific and popular character of the early acts of his reign, *ib.*; concludes a treaty with England, by which the right of search, claimed by the latter, is admitted in a modified form, 380; his sentimental and doubtful liberalism, 381; slightly modifies the censorship of the press, 384; abolishes the court of the secret department, *ib.*; annexes Georgia to the Russian empire, *ib.*; expostulates with Napoleon concerning the execution of the Duke d'Enghien, 387; refuses to acknowledge Napoleon as emperor of France, *ib.*; enters with England, Austria, and Sweden, into a coalition against France, 388; endeavours to draw Prussia into the league against France, 389; his conduct after the battle of Austerlitz, 392; signs a separate treaty of peace with France, but afterwards refuses to ratify it, 394; issues an arrogant proclamation against Napoleon, 396; his troops encounter the French at Pultusk, 397; and at Eylau, 398; applies to the English government for a loan, and meets a refusal, 400; his troops are defeated by Napoleon at Friedland, 403; desires peace with France, 405; meets the emperor Napoleon on the Niemen, 406; concludes the peace of Tilsit, 408; is fascinated by the manners of the French emperor, 412; sends an army into the principalities of the Danube, to avenge an affront offered to him by the Turkish government, 413; applies to England to make a naval demonstration against Constantinople for the purpose of intimidating the Porte into an abandonment of hostilities with Russia, 414; his fleet gains a victory over that of the Turks near the Isle of Tenedos, 415; concludes an armistice with the Porte, *ib.*; his conduct with regard to the French alliance, 417; offers his mediation to restore peace between France and England, 418; professes his willingness to declare war against England, if Napoleon insisted on it, 420; his admiration of Napoleon, *ib.*; breaks off all relations with England, and proclaims anew the principles of the armed neutrality, 421; summons Sweden to join in a league against England, and on receiving a refusal, declares war against that country, *ib.*; seizes on Finland, *ib.*; meets

Napoleon at Erfurth, 423; writes a joint letter with Napoleon to George III., inviting him to conclude a peace on the basis of sacrificing his Spanish allies, 425; is hurt at Napoleon's marriage with an Austrian archduchess, after having made proposals for one of his sisters, 427; issues an ukase, announcing that Moldavia and Wallachia were annexed to the Russian empire, 428; concludes a peace with Turkey, by which, though he gains Bessarabia, he loses Moldavia and Wallachia, 430; disputes arise between him and Napoleon, 431; makes proposals of accommodation to the French emperor, who leaves them unanswered, 433; his energetic conduct when the French army enters Russia, 436—438; concludes a treaty of alliance with England and with Sweden, 439; his troops fight the great battle of Borodino, 441; his address to the empire on the entrance of the French into Moscow, 444; refuses to enter into negotiations with Napoleon, 447; endeavours to excite the whole of Europe against Napoleon, 452; takes offensive measures against France, *ib.*; marches with the allied troops upon Paris, 454; he enters Paris, and is received with ardour, 456; visits England, 457; returns to St. Petersburg, and is received with enthusiasm, *ib.*; attends a congress of the sovereigns of Europe at Vienna, 458; insists on the cession to Russia of the whole grand-duchy of Warsaw, *ib.*; is induced by the attitude of England, Austria, and France, to abate his pretensions, *ib.*; takes to arms on the return of Napoleon from Elba, 459; enters Paris with the allied armies after the final overthrow of Napoleon, 460; establishes the union of despots known as the "Holy Alliance," 461; proceeds to Warsaw, and establishes a constitution for Poland, *ib.*; declines to assist the Greeks in their struggle against the sultan, 462; his dread of revolutionary doctrines, and the severity of his repressive measures, *ib.*; his last days embittered by a dread of conspiracy and assassination, 463; his death, *ib.*; estimate of his character, *ib.*

Alexander II. succeeds to the throne, 546; is crowned at Moscow, *ib.*

Alexis, Michaelowitz, becomes czar, 115; during the early years of his reign, the country ruled by a council of regency, *ib.*; intercedes with the infuriated people for the life of his corrupt minister, 116; a new pretender, assuming to be the son of the czar Dmitri, lays claim to his throne, *ib.*; becomes a candidate for the throne of Poland, but is rejected, 117; assists the Cossacks of the Ukraine against the Poles, 120; invades Sweden, but is glad to conclude a truce, which is afterwards converted into a treaty of peace, *ib.*; obtains possession of all the Ukraine to the left bank of the Dnieper, *ib.*; he depreciates the currency, and thus provokes a rebellion at Moscow, 121; courts foreign alliances, *ib.*; the first Russian vessels are built under his superintendence, *ib.*;



- is threatened by the sultan, and returns a defiant answer, 123; his death and character, *ib.*
- Alexis, Petrowitz, his character and marriage, 168; is a source of anxiety to his father, the czar Peter, 177; consents never to claim the succession, 178; is summoned to meet his father at Copenhagen, but proceeds to Vienna, and throws himself on the protection of the emperor Charles VI., 179; is induced to return by a promise of pardon, and instantly arrested, *ib.*; signs his renunciation of the crown, 180; is placed in confinement, and subjected to inquisitorial examinations, 181; makes imprudent confessions, *ib.*; is placed on his trial for high treason, 184; and condemned to death, 186; his mysterious death, *ib.*; futile attempt to place his son upon the throne on the death of Peter the Great, 204.
- Alma, battle of the, 532.
- Andrew of Suzdal discerns the cause of the prostration of Russia, and resolves to attempt its consolidation, 31; undertakes an expedition against Novgorod, and though defeated by the citizens, induces them to acknowledge his supremacy, 32; various principalities revolt against him, *ib.*; decline of his authority, *ib.*; he is murdered, *ib.*
- Anna, Duchess of Courland, and second daughter of Ivan, the half-brother of Peter the Great, ascends the throne, after certain conditions have been exacted from her by the council, 211; at the desire of the nation, she cancels the conditions, *ib.*; she confides the chief power of the state to her favourite Biren, 242; desires to follow the example of Peter the Great, *ib.*; forces an obnoxious sovereign on Poland, *ib.*; surrenders the Persian territories acquired by Peter the Great, 213; sends a Russian army into the Crimea, *ib.*; her troops take Azoff from the Turks, 214; concludes a peace with the Porte, 215; finishes the great canal from the Lake Ladoga to St. Petersburg, *ib.*; her aversion to the vulgar habits of her nobles, 216; her cruel eccentricities, *ib.*; tyranny of Biren during the latter part of her reign, 217; her death, 218.
- Austria joins Russia in a war against Turkey, 214; backs out of the war, and makes a separate and most dishonourable peace with the sultan, 215; agrees with the empress Catherine to unite in an attack on the Ottoman empire, share its spoils between them, drive the Turks out of Europe, and re-establish the ancient republic of Greece, 306; sends an army to Moldavia, to act against the Turks, 315; concludes peace with the Porte, 325; assists in the third division of Poland, 329; enters into an alliance with Russia and England, for the purpose of acting against the republican government of France, 351; remonstrates with Napoleon against his encroachments in Italy, 388; is defeated at Austerlitz, 390; sues to Napoleon for peace, 392—394; renews the war with the French emperor, and after a brief but disastrous campaign, purchases peace by large territorial concessions, 426; joins Russia and Prussia against Napoleon, 453; expresses its sympathy with the emperor Nicholas on his efforts to crush the insurrection in Poland, yet secretly corresponds with the Poles, 488; annexes to itself the republic of Cracow, and thus extinguishes the last spark of Polish nationality, 515; is shaken by the commotions of 1848, 516; Hungarian insurrection against, 517; obtains the assistance of Russia, and defeats the revolutionists, 518; endeavours to avert hostilities between Russia and the Western Powers, 524; enters into a convention with France and England, by which it sanctions the war against Russia, 526; desires the czar to specify the exact time when his troops would evacuate the Danubian provinces, 529; enters into a selfish and equivocating treaty with France and England, 540.
- Balaklava, the English troops take possession of the town and harbour of, as a base of operations, 533; the Russians attempt to seize the town and burn the English shipping in the port, 535; cavalry engagement at, *ib.*
- Baltic, George I. sends an English fleet there for the protection of the Swedes against Russia, 190; is blockaded by the fleets of England and France, 526; proceedings of the allied fleets in, and taking of Bomarsund, 529.
- Batou invades Russia with an immense host of Tartars, who commit shocking atrocities, 35; retires from Russia, 36; again ravages it, and then enters Poland, 37; returns to Russia, settles on the banks of the Volga, and there establishes the Golden Horde, *ib.*; settles all disputes among the Russian princes who submit to his authority, 38.
- Biren, Ernest Von, is, by a stipulation of the council with the empress Anna, excluded from Russia, 211; he yet arrives with her at Moscow, *ib.*; he acquires an unbounded influence over the empress, 212; his tyrannical and ferocious conduct, 217; assumes the regency during the minority of Ivan, 218; is arrested and sent to Siberia, 249.
- Bomarsund is captured by the French and English, 529; and demolished, 530.
- Boris Godunof, his early life, 81; rules the empire in the name of Feodor, and aims at the crown, 82; causes the infant Dmitri to be murdered, 83; defeats the Tartars, 84; deprives the Russian peasantry of their right to leave the estates on which they were born, and thus institutes serfdom, 85; is elected czar on the extinction of the Ruric dynasty, 87; his determined attitude awes the Tartars, 88; prosperity of the early part of his reign, *ib.*; his efforts to civilise Russia, 89; the opposition of the boyards drive him into tyrannical measures, *ib.*; three years' famine in Russia during his reign, *ib.*; he denounces the false Dmitri as an adventurer, 92; his exertions against Dmitri, 94; sinks into a depressed state of mind, 95; his death and character, 96.
- Catherine I., her origin, 149; is publicly married to the czar Peter, 168; the order of St. Catherine instituted in her honour, 170; is crowned empress at the command of Peter, as a recognition of her services, 195; rumours respecting her supposed amour with Moens de la Croix, 196; succeeds her husband on the imperial throne, 205; popularity of the early acts of her reign, 206; her licentious and intemperate habits, *ib.*; her death, 207.
- Catherine II., her marriage with the Grand-duke Peter, 228; her dislike of her husband, and early amour with Soltikoff, 229; and with Count Poniatowski, 230; Peter talks of repudiating her when he comes to the throne, a circumstance which induces her to lend herself to a conspiracy against him, *ib.*; her duplicity, 239; her apprehension of being placed in confinement by her husband, 240; arrives at St. Petersburg, and engages the guards in her cause, 244; is pro-



claimed empress, and crowned by the Archbishop of Novgorod, 245; Peter writes her a submissive letter, which she leaves unanswered, 247; extorts an act of abdication from him, 248; her efforts to acquire popularity, 249; strong feeling against her at Moscow, and general reaction in favour of Peter, 250; her conduct on hearing of his murder, 252; she confirms the peace with Prussia, 254; she is crowned at Moscow, but is unable to win the regard of the people there, *ib.*; she evades the request of the clergy to restore the possessions taken from them by Peter III., 255; they excite insurrection against her, *ib.*; her occasional playfulness, 256; publishes a manifesto inviting foreigners to settle in her dominions, and promising them free gifts of land, 257; declines marrying Gregory Orloff, 259; places Count Poniatowski on the throne of Poland, 261; her supposed connection with the murder of the deposed emperor Ivan, 263; her liberality to the literary men of France, 267; her influence over Poland, *ib.*; she promotes the dissensions within it, 269; resolves to remodel the laws of Russia, 270; commands all the provinces of Russia to send deputies to Moscow to assist in that object, *ib.*; her famous book of "Instructions" to them, 271; narrowly escapes assassination, 273; orders the Academy of Sciences to select a number of learned men to travel over the empire, and report concerning the capacities of the land and the wants of the people, 274; is the first person in Russia who submits to inoculation, 275; carries on a war against Turkey, 277; is visited by Prince Henry of Prussia respecting the conspiracy against Poland, *ib.*; sends a fleet into the Mediterranean to excite and support an insurrection of the Greek Christians against the Porte, 278; her fleet destroys that of the Turks at Tchesmé, 280; her cruel conduct towards the Princess Tarrakanoff, 282; adopts measures for the suppression of the plague at Moscow, 284; is disposed to contract a clandestine marriage with Gregory Orloff, 286; discards him as her lover, 287; takes part with Prussia and Austria in the first division of Poland, 288; her hospitality to Diderot, 291; makes peace with Turkey, *ib.*; is disturbed by the insurrection of Pugatschef, 294; receives Potemkin into her favour, 297; visits Moscow, 298; transfers her smiles to Zavadofski, but retains Potemkin as minister, 299; her jealousy of the Grand-duke Paul, 300; is again visited by Prince Henry of Prussia, who, on the part of his brother, recommends the division of the remainder of Poland, *ib.*; enters into a new treaty with Turkey, 302; exhibits a coldness towards England, 303; splendour of her court, *ib.*; jealous of the maritime power of England, she institutes a combination of the northern powers to resist its pretensions, 305; fixes her affections on Lanskoï, *ib.*; resolves on the subjection of the Crimea, *ib.*; agrees with the emperor Joseph II. to drive the Turks out of Europe and re-establish the ancient republic of Greece, 306; erects a colossal statue to Peter the Great, *ib.*; appoints the Princess Daschkaw directress of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, 307; annexes the Crimea to the Russian empire, 308; her grief at the death of Lanskoï, 310; her toleration and liberality, 310; makes a magnificent progress to Kherson and the Crimea, 311; visits the battle-field of Pultowa, 314; engages in another war with Turkey, 315; scornfully rejects the proffered mediation of Sweden, 316; her firm-

ness on St. Petersburg being threatened by the Swedes, *ib.*; concludes peace with Sweden, 319; is startled at the excesses of the French revolution, and abandons liberal opinions, 325; concludes peace with the Turks at Jassy, *ib.*; declares war against Poland, 327; effects the second partition of Poland, *ib.*; is insulted by the young king of Sweden, 330; annexes Courland to the Russian empire, *ib.*; sends an expedition into Persia, 331; she dies, *ib.*; estimate of her character, 332.

Caucasus, description of the, 504; policy of Russia towards the, 506; failure of Russian hostilities against, 508; prospects of the, for the future, 510. Charles XII. ascends the throne of Sweden, 146; a hostile league is formed against him by the kings of Denmark and Poland, and the czar of Russia, *ib.*; he turns his arms against the king of Denmark, and compels him to sue for peace, 147; defeats the Russians at the battle of Narva, *ib.*; proceeds to Poland to punish Augustus, 148; his interview with Augustus, king of Poland, 156; his brutal execution of General Patkul, *ib.*; he deprives Augustus of the Polish throne, and places Stanislaus upon it, *ib.*; is visited by the Duke of Marlborough, 157; drives the czar Peter out of Grodno, 158; pursues Peter into Russia, *ib.*; gains an equivocal victory at Miholo, *ib.*; advances on Moscow, 159; turns aside into the steppes of the Ukraine, *ib.*; lays siege to Pultowa, 161; is utterly defeated at Pultowa by Peter, 162; takes refuge among the Turks, 163; induces the Porte to take hostile steps against Russia, 165; his anger on hearing of the escape of Peter from the banks of the Pruth, 168; arrives at Stralsund, 171; he undertakes its defence against the Prussians, Danes, and Saxons, 172; his death, 190.

Christianity embraced by Olga, who attempts to introduce it into Russia, 13; is adopted by Vladimir, who commands the Russians to follow his example, 21. Church of Russia, extravagant schism in, 68; abolition of the patriarch of, by Peter the Great, 192; the possessions of much curtailed by the violent reforms of Peter III., 239; Catherine refuses to restore them, 255.

Code of laws promulgated by Yaroslaf, 23; ordinances and customs of Russia collected into a, by Ivan III., 63; instructions for a, by the empress Catherine II., 272; a uniform code is constructed out of existing materials, at the orders of the emperor Nicholas, 472.

Constantine, the Grand-duke, memoir of, 466; renounces his right of accession to the throne, 467; is proclaimed emperor, but confirms his renunciation, 468; insurrection in favour of, *ib.*; attends the coronation of Nicholas, and is the first to offer homage, 473; his behaviour as viceroy of Poland, 484; abandons Warsaw on the outbreak of the insurrection there, 486; reciprocates the civilities of General Chlopicki, 487; death of, 493.

Constantinople invaded by the Russians under Oleg, 9; again invaded by them under Igor, 10; extravagant design of the empress Catherine concerning it, 305; Napoleon refuses his consent to Alexander to take possession of it, 410; is threatened by an English fleet, which it repulses, 414; alarm at in consequence of the progress of a Russian army to Adrianople, 481; Lord Raglan and Marshal St. Arnaud land at, 527.

Cossacks, origin of, 117; insurrection of, under Bogdan Chmielnicki, against the Poles, 118; they



- apply for assistance to Russia, and offer, in return for it, to become the vassals of the czar, 119; they acknowledge the sovereignty of the czar, 120; insurrection of those of the Don, under Stenka Radzin, 121.
- Crimea, the Tartars of, ravage Russia, 65; Russia again invaded by the Tartars of, 84; is annexed to the Russian dominions by the empress Catherine, 308; a grand progress to is made by Catherine, 311; the allied army of England, France, and Turkey land on the, 528; great storm in, 539; wretched state of our troops in, 540, 541.
- Cronstadt, the fortifications of, designed by Peter the Great, 152.
- Czar, the title of, first adopted by Ivan III., 58; its signification, *ib.*
- Daschkaw, Princess, her bias against Peter III., 236; her activity in the conspiracy against him, 241; report respecting her mode of winning Count Panin over to the cause of Catherine, 243; incurs the displeasure of the empress, 256; receives a letter from Catherine, and returns a haughty reply, 260; returns to St. Petersburg after her travels on the continent, and is again received into the favour of the empress, who appoints her directress of the Academy of Arts and Sciences, 307; is commanded by the emperor Paul to retire to Novgorod, 337.
- Dmitri Donskoi acquires the grand-princedom, 44; he convenes a meeting of the subordinate princes of Russia, and induces them to sign a treaty restoring the ancient order of succession, *ib.*; the wisdom of his policy, 45; he obtains a great victory over the Tartars on the banks of the Don, 46; in honour of it he receives his surname of Donskoi, 47; he is compelled again to submit to the Tartar yoke, 48; his death, *ib.*
- Dmitri, infant son of Ivan IV., is slandered by Boris Godunof, 82; is mysteriously murdered, 83; is reported to be alive, 91; his body is exhumed, removed to Moscow, and canonised by the patriarch, 105.
- Dmitri, the impostor, asserts himself to be the son of Ivan IV., 91; is patronised by the king of Poland, 92; mystery concerning him, *ib.*; enters Russia with a few Polish troops, and is believed in by the people, 93; gains a victory over the troops of the czar, 94; is defeated in a second battle, *ib.*; takes refuge at Putivle, a fortified town near the frontiers, 95; Basmanof, the commander of the army, declares for him, 97; he enters Moscow in state, and is received with enthusiasm, *ib.*; is acknowledged by the mother of the murdered Dmitri as her son, 98; is crowned czar, 99; excites Russian jealousy by his preference of the Poles, *ib.*; and by his marriage with the Polish princess, Marina Mnisek, 100; he becomes embroiled with the clergy, who get up a conspiracy against him, *ib.*; insurrection against him, 102; is murdered, 103; his corpse is treated with brutal indignity, 104; he is reported to be still living, 105.
- Dmitri, the second false, surnamed the "Robber of Tushino," claims the crown, 107; Marina acknowledges him to be her husband, 108; he is baffled in an attempt to take the fortified monastery of the Trinity, near Moscow, *ib.*; is assisted by the king of Poland, 109; losing all hope of obtaining the throne, he supports himself and followers by plundering the country, and is at length murdered by a Tartar chieftain, *ib.*
- Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, a conspiracy is undertaken to depose the infant Ivan, and to place her on the throne, 220; she consents to become a party to it, 221; she addresses the guards, who seize Ivan and his parents, and proclaim her as empress, *ib.*; she refuses to sanction the death of any criminal—a circumstance which gives rise to a number of cruel punishments, 223; she continues the war with Sweden, 224; the Swedes, to conciliate her, offer the crown of Sweden to her relative, the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, afterwards Peter III., *ib.*; summons the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp to St. Petersburg, and announces her intention of making him her successor, *ib.*; concludes peace with Sweden, *ib.*; engages in the famous seven years' war against Frederic II. of Prussia, 225; her motives for doing so, 226; her troops invade Prussia, and are guilty of great cruelties, 227; again invades Prussia, 231; her troops inflict a terrible blow on Frederic, 232; her death, 233; and character, 234.
- England enters into an alliance with Russia and Austria for the purpose of acting against the republican government of France, 351; acts in conjunction with a Russian force against the French in Holland, 364; the emperor Paul enters into a maritime convention with Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia, by which the claims of England on the ocean are to be resisted, 366; acts with vigour against the northern powers, 367; defeats the Danes in a naval engagement at Copenhagen, *ib.*; dissolution of the coalition of the northern powers against, 375; signs the peace of Amiens, 381; again declares war against France, 386; declares war against Prussia, 394; refuses a loan to the emperor Alexander to enable him to carry on the war against France, 400; at the request of Alexander, makes a naval demonstration against Constantinople, and is repulsed, 414; causes the bombardment of Copenhagen and the seizure of the Danish fleet, 419; Russia declares war against, 421; seizes a Russian fleet at Lisbon, 422; declines the pacific overtures of France and Russia, 427; concludes an alliance with Russia on the invasion of that country by Napoleon, 439; opposes the union of the crowns of Poland and Russia on the same head, 458; enters into a secret treaty with Austria and France, binding them to act together to carry into effect the stipulations of the treaty of Paris, *ib.*; is instrumental in bringing about the final overthrow of Napoleon, 459; declines to participate in the "Holy Alliance," 461; enters into an alliance with France and Russia for the protection of the Greeks, during the struggle of the latter for independence, 477; assists in the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, *ib.*; expostulates with the Russian government respecting the treaty of Adrianople, 482; the sultan, defeated by Mehemet Ali, applies to for assistance, but in vain, 500; demands from the sultan an explanation concerning the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, 502; in conjunction with Russia, Austria, and Prussia, saves Turkey from dissolution before the victorious forces of Mehemet Ali, and obtains a modification of the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, 503; excitement in, in consequence of the seizure of a British merchantman by Russia, while attempting to evade the blockade of the Circassian coast, 508; is visited for the second time by the emperor Nicholas, who becomes the guest of Queen Victoria, 512; receives from the emperor of Russia a memorandum of his supposed views respecting Turkey, *ib.*; rejects the proffered bribe of Egypt



- and Candia from the emperor Nicholas, 524; declares in favour of the Porte against the claims of Russia, *ib.*; in conjunction with France, declares war against Russia, 525; sends troops to the East, and a fleet to the Baltic, 526; is victorious at the Alma, 532; defeats the Russians at Inkermann, 537.
- Eupatoria taken possession of and garrisoned by the English, 536; is vainly attacked by the Russians, *ib.*; battle of, 542.
- Feodor succeeds as czar, 81; his feebleness of intellect, 81; his helpless apathy on Russia being invaded by the Tartars of the Crimea, 84; the ecclesiastical dignity of patriarch first used in Russia during his reign, 85; his death, and consequent extinction of the dynasty of Ruric, 86.
- Feodor, son of Alexis, succeeds to the throne, 124; promotes the civilisation of the empire, *ib.*; his benevolence and reforms, 125; he marries a Polish princess, 126; his death, 127.
- France promotes the conspiracy which places the empress Elizabeth on the throne, 220; endeavours to involve Russia in a war with Turkey, 269; outbreak of the great revolution in, 318; the National Convention of, threatens the aristocratic governments of Europe with a democratic propaganda, 350; makes peace (at Amiens) with England, 381; renews the war with England, 386; coalition against, 388; enthusiasm in, at the projected invasion of Russia, 434; Napoleon leads the troops of across the Niemen, 435; they enter Moscow, 443; horrors of their retreat from, 448; its capital is occupied by the emperor Alexander and the allied armies, 456; its capital again capitulates to the allies, 460; its frontier is reduced to the state in which it stood in 1790, *ib.*; enters into an alliance with England and Russia for the protection of the Greeks during the struggle of the latter for independence, 477; aids in the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, *ib.*; demands of the Porte an explanation of the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, 502; entertains a jealousy of England with respect to Eastern affairs, *ib.*; undertakes the patronage of the Latin monks at Jerusalem, 521; declares in favour of Turkey against the demands of the emperor Nicholas, 524; in conjunction with England, declares war against Russia, 525; sends troops to the East, 526; is victorious at the Alma, 532; the troops of, rescue the English at Inkermann, 537.
- Frederic II. of Prussia (the Great), his aggressive conduct gives rise to the seven years' war, 225; league of Austria, France, Russia, Saxony, and Sweden against him, *ib.*; his great reverses, 226; is reduced to the verge of ruin, 232; he is deserted by England, 233; Peter III. concludes peace with him, and sends him military aid, 237; recommends moderation to Peter III., 239; sends his brother to St. Petersburg to confer with the empress Catherine respecting their sinister views on Poland, 277; suggests to Catherine to partition the remainder of Poland, 300.
- Ghengis, or Zengis Khan, account of, 33.
- Golden Horde, establishment of the on the banks of the Volga, 37; is divided into two rival parts, 41; causes several Russian princes to be tried and executed, 42; decline of the, 45; is attacked and punished by Tamerlane, 49; is attacked and plundered by the Russians, and broken up, 56.
- Holy Places at Jerusalem, disputes concerning the, 522.
- Hungary, its connection with Austria, 516; outbreak of the revolution in, 517; is for a time successful against the Austrian forces, 518; intervention of Russia, and extinction of the insurrection, *ib.*; abrogation of the national privileges, and subjection of the country to military rule, 519.
- Igor succeeds his father Ruric, 7; acquires the regal power on the death of his uncle Oleg, 10; sails with an immense force to Constantinople, *ib.*; is repulsed by the Greeks, and returns with scarcely a third of his army, 11; persecutes the Drevlians, and is murdered by them, 12.
- Igor of Suzdal seizes the throne of Kief, 31.
- Inkermann, battle of, 537.
- Isiaslaf becomes grand-prince of Kief, 25; is driven from his throne, but restored to it by Boleslas II., Duke of Poland, 26; contends, for a period of seven years, with his brothers for supremacy, and is again expelled from Kief, *ib.*; he obtains the aid of Pope Gregory VIII., who engages Boleslas again to restore him; he regains his throne, *ib.*; his death, 27.
- Ivan I., surnamed Kalita, becomes grand-prince, 42; makes Moscow the capital of the empire, 43; his cunning and extortions, *ib.*; he propitiates the Golden Horde by presents and flattery, *ib.*; crushes his rival the Prince of Twer, and binds up the power of Russia, *ib.*; he promotes commerce, *ib.*; his death, 44.
- Ivan II., his eventless reign, 44.
- Ivan III., known as the Great, ascends the throne of Moscow, 51; his crafty policy, 52; he takes the Tartar city of Kasan, *ib.*; he subdues Novgorod, 53; and annexes it to his dominions, 54; his extreme terror at the approach of the Tartars, 55; his troops fall on the Golden Horde, and defeat the Tartars, 56; his despotic conduct towards Novgorod, *ib.*; he annexes the principality of Twer to his dominions, 57; subdues other princes, and makes himself an absolute monarch, 58; terrifies the Prince of Lithuania into submission, *ib.*; adopts the title of czar, *ib.*; reflections on his career, 59; he marries a Greek princess, *ib.*; he erects the Kremlin, 60; he disgraces his wife, but afterwards restores her to favour, 62; extinguishes an extravagant schism in the church, 63; collects the ordinances and customs of Russia into a code, *ib.*; his death and character, 64.
- Ivan IV., surnamed "The Terrible," misery of his early life, and depraved conduct of his mother during her regency, 66; insolent bearing of Prince Schnisky towards him, 67; he causes Schnisky to be torn to pieces by his hounds, 68; in his seventeenth year he is crowned czar of Russia, *ib.*; remarkable change in his conduct, 69; he institutes the Strelitz, *ib.*; subdues the Tartars of Kasan, *ib.*; death of his amiable wife Anastasia, and breaking-out of his ferocity, 70; he puts his virtuous advisers to death, 71; he abandons Moscow and retires to the fortress of Alexandrosky, *ib.*; is persuaded by the people to return and resume the government, 72; his burlesque of the forms of religion, 73; his morbid love of murders and executions, *ib.*; his march of devastation to Novgorod, 74; he returns to Moscow, bringing with him a number of prisoners, 76; he causes 200 persons to be executed in various revolting ways, *ib.*; he is challenged to single combat by the king of Poland, *ib.*; the latter makes war against him, 77; though married to seven wives, he proposes for the hand of Queen Elizabeth of England, *ib.*; his cruel caprices, 78; in a fit of passion he kills his eldest son, *ib.*; his remorse and death, 79.



- Ivan, half-brother of Peter the Great, his personal afflictions, 127; he is declared czar, and desires that Peter may be associated with him in the government, 128; they are crowned conjointly, *ib.*; his sister induces him to marry, *ib.*; resigns all power into the hands of Peter, and leads a retired life, 132.
- Ivan, son of the Princess Anne and the Duke of Brunswick, is proclaimed emperor when but two months old, 218; is deposed in favour of Elizabeth, 221; he is placed in rigid confinement in the fortress of Schlüsselburg, 222; is visited in his prison by the emperor Peter III., 240; is cruelly murdered, 264.
- Jews, savage outbreak in Kief against the, 28; they are banished, *ib.*
- Kief, city of, 4; the inhabitants appeal to Ruric, who sends his step-son Oskold to their assistance, 7; is plundered, and nearly destroyed by the Poles, 23; is besieged by the Poles under Boleslas II., 26; massacre and banishment of the Jews there, 28; falls into a state of anarchy, 30; is invaded and burnt by the Tartars, 37.
- Lefort, account of, 130; he instructs the young czar Peter, 131; raises and drills a body of foreign troops for the czar, 133; his death and character, 143.
- Mentschikoff attracts the favour of the czar, 150; his dishonesty, 191; his great power during the reign of Catherine, 206; engages the young czar, Peter Alexiewitch, to his daughter Maria, 209; his disgrace and banishment, *ib.*
- Michael, Prince of Twer, is tried and beheaded by the Tartars on a charge of poisoning a Tartar princess, 41.
- Moguls—*see* Tartars.
- Moscow made the capital of the empire by Ivan Kalita, 43; is twice besieged by Olguer, Prince of Lithuania, 45; is taken and set on fire by the Tartars, 47; strong display of feeling there against the empress Catherine II., 250; is ravaged by the plague, 283; is at the mercy of mobs of fanatical rioters, 285; is entered by Napoleon and the "grand army" of France, 444; destruction of by fire, 455; the French retreat from the ruins of, 447; is rebuilt by the emperor Alexander, 462.
- Munich is appointed generalissimo of the Russian army, 212; conducts an expedition against the Tartars of the Crimea, 213; conducts a war against Turkey, 214; takes the lead in a movement to depose the regent Biren, 218; is made first minister of Russia, 219; is exiled by the empress Elizabeth to Siberia, 222; recalled from exile by Peter III., 238; makes great efforts to save the czar, 246, 247; enters the service of Catherine, 249.
- Napoleon becomes first consul of France, 365; he attributes the murder of Paul to the influence of England, 375; his plan for the invasion, in conjunction with Russia, of British India, 376; is irritated with Alexander for his concessions to England, 380; signs the peace of Amiens, 381; orders the arrest and execution of the Duke d'Enghien, 386; is crowned emperor of France, 387; converts the Italian republic into a kingdom, and is crowned king of Italy, 388; defeats the Russians and Austrians at Austerlitz, 390; establishes the confederation of the Rhine, 394; prostrates Russia on the field of Jena, 395; talks of the reconstruction of Poland, 397; fights the indecisive battle of Pultusk, *ib.*; and of Eylau, 398; opens secret negotiations for peace with Russia, 401; defeats the Russians in the battle of Friedland, 403; has an interview with the emperor Alexander on the Niemen, 406; concludes the peace of Tilsit, 408; sends Sebastiani as ambassador to Constantinople, 412; treacherously sanctions the partition of Turkey, 415; entertains the Russian emperor at Erfurth, 423; in conjunction with Alexander, makes pacific proposals to England, 425; again humiliates Austria, and drives her to purchase a peace, 426; marries the archduchess, Maria Louisa, 427; annexes the dominions of Alexander's brother-in-law, the Duke of Oldenburg, to the French empire, 431; makes preparations for a war with Russia, 432; drives Sweden into an alliance with that power, 433; prepares for his great expedition to Russia, *ib.*; Talleyrand, Fouché, and others, endeavour to dissuade him from it, 434; proceeds to Dresden, 435; he crosses the Niemen with his invading army, 436; delays at Wilna, 437; sufferings of his troops, 440; fights the great battle of Borodino, 441; enters Moscow, 444; is driven from the city by fire, 445; returns to it on the extinction of the flames, 446; vainly endeavours to bring about negotiations for peace, 447; commences the retreat from Moscow, *ib.*; is overtaken by the Russian winter, 448; dreadful sufferings of his troops, 449; he crosses the bridge of the Berezina, 450; leaves the army, and hastens on to Paris, 451; Europe in arms against him, 453; his wonderful activity and military skill, 454; signs his abdication of the throne of France, 456; departs for Elba, 457; leaves Elba, and returns to Paris, 459; is finally defeated at Waterloo, and again signs his abdication, 460; is exiled to St. Helena, *ib.*
- Napoleon III. demands from the Porte the concession of certain privileges to the Latin monks of Jerusalem, 522; eventually withdraws his demands, rather than disturb the peace of Europe, *ib.*; declares that he is ready to co-operate with England in upholding the Turkish government, 524; declares war against Russia, 525; sends troops to the East, and a fleet to the Baltic, 527; addresses a sympathetic proclamation to his troops on the occasion of their suffering severely from cholera, *ib.*
- Nicholas hesitates to accept the throne at the expense of his brother Constantine, 467; consents to do so on the reiterated refusal of Constantine, 468; crushes the insurrection which breaks out on his accession, *ib.*; appoints a commission to investigate the nature of the disaffection, 469; his severity towards the conspirators, 471; causes an expiatory ceremony to be performed in the Place of the Senate, the scene of the outbreak, 472; endeavours to eradicate the prevailing corruption in the state, and orders the imperial ukases to be collected, printed, and codified, *ib.*; his coronation, *ib.*; short account of his early life, *ib.*; his policy, 473; his appearance and manners, 474; makes war on Persia, 475; enters into an alliance with the sovereigns of England and France to put a stop to the Turkish war of extermination against the Greeks in the struggle of the latter for independence, 477; aids in the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Navarino, *ib.*; renews war with Turkey, 478; narrowly escapes shipwreck, 479; concludes the treaty of Adrianople with the Porte, 481; is crowned king of Poland, 483; his unbending reception of the leaders of the Polish insurrection, 487; insists on an unconditional sur-



- render of the Poles, 490; the Diet pronounce a sentence of dethronement against him as king of Poland, *ib.*; appoints Paskiewitch to the command of the Russian army in Poland, 494; the insurgents submit to him, 495; his implacable resentment against the patriots, 496; declares Poland an integral part of the Russian empire, *ib.*; the sultan solicits help from, against his rebellious vassal, Mehemet Ali, and receives a favourable reply, 501; extorts the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi from the Porte, *ib.*; consents to a modification of the last-named treaty, 504; his policy with respect to the Caucasus, 506; blockades the coast of the Caucasus, 508; his vessels seize an English merchantman, which attempts to evade the blockade, *ib.*; visits the Caucasus, but fails to produce an impression on the Circassian chiefs, whom he had invited to a conference, *ib.*; makes a formal declaration of war against the Circassians, *ib.*; failure of his military efforts in the Caucasus, *ib.*; sends an expedition against Khiva, 511; visits England, and becomes the guest of Queen Victoria, 512; sends to the English cabinet a memorandum of his views concerning the affairs of Turkey, *ib.*; his opinions concerning representative monarchy, 514; aids in the suppression of the little republic of Cracow, 515; assumes a dictatorial attitude towards Switzerland, *ib.*; extends assistance to Austria, and crushes the Hungarian revolution, 518; interferes on behalf of the Greek monks at Jerusalem, 522; demands a protective power over all the Greek Christians in the Ottoman empire, *ib.*; on his claims being refused, withdraws his ambassador from Constantinople, *ib.*; directs a Russian army to cross the Pruth, 523; attempts to bribe England, 524; requires of Austria and Prussia an absolute and unconditional armed neutrality in the coming war, 525; orders a *Te Deum* to be sung in all the churches of St. Petersburg, in consequence of the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope, *ib.*; refuses to return an answer to the final *ultimatum* of France and England, who consequently declare war against him, *ib.*; his troops experience reverses on the banks of the Danube, and are compelled to raise the siege of Silistria, 528; recalls his forces from the Danubian provinces, 531; his troops are defeated at the battle of the Alma, 532; and at Inkermann, 537; his excitement and incessant exertions, 541; his last manifesto, 542; his death, *ib.*; estimate of his character, 544.
- Novgorod, city of, 4; the inhabitants of, solicit the assistance of Ruric the pirate, 5; who compels them to submit to his government, 6; becomes prosperous as Kiev declines, 32; expedition against, by Andrew of Suzdal, *ib.*; though he is twice repulsed, the city eventually submits to his rule, *ib.*; the citizens resist the collection of a tax made by the Tartars, 40; is subdued by Ivan III., 53; and annexed to the grand-principdom, 54; awful massacres there by Ivan the Terrible, 74.
- Odessa, bombardment of, by an allied English and French fleet, in consequence of the outrage of a flag of truce, 526.
- Oleg governs in the name of the infant Igor, 7; turns his arms against Kiev, and unites it to the government of Novgorod, 8; proceeds to Constantinople, which submits to him, 9; retires after having extorted extravagant terms from the emperor Leo, *ib.*; his death, *ib.*
- O'ga assumes the government during the minority of her son Sviatoslaf, 12; avenges the murder of her husband Igor, *ib.*; embraces Christianity, and enters the Greek church under the name of Helena, 13; resigns the throne to her son, 14; dies, and is canonised, 15.
- Orloff, Gregory, his origin, 240; attracts the notice of the empress Catherine, who receives him into her favour, 241; enters into a conspiracy against the emperor, *ib.*; his arrogance, 257; seeks to marry the empress, 259; attempts to seize him by the discontented nobles, 260; takes active measures for the suppression of the plague at Moscow, 284; a triumphal arch erected to his honour in consequence, 286; rejects the offer of a clandestine marriage made him by the empress, *ib.*; his melancholy and death, 309.
- Orloff, Alexis, brings Catherine from Peterhoff the night before the revolution, 244; is nominally in command during the destruction of the Turkish fleet at Tchesmè, 280; his extravagance, 281; his treacherous conduct towards the unfortunate Princess Tarrakanoff, 282; his brutal manners, 283; is compelled to assist at the second funeral of the murdered emperor, Peter III., 337.
- Oskold assumes the sovereignty of Kiev, 7; is murdered, 8.
- Paul I., his first marriage, 291; Catherine's jealousy of, 300; death of his first wife, *ib.*; his visit to Berlin, and second marriage, 301; ascends the throne, 335; speculations as to his parentage, *ib.*; he endeavours to cast odium upon the memory of Catherine, 336; visits Kosciusko, 338; subjects the guards to severe restrictions, *ib.*; prohibits the wearing of round hats, 340; commands that horses are to be harnessed in the German style, 341; institutes an oppressive and offensive duty in approaching him, *ib.*; makes absurd and irritating regulations for the army, 342; establishes a severe censorship of the press, 344; commands that all strangers in Russia should attend regularly at their respective places of worship, *ib.*; prohibits the wearing of pantaloons or lapelled waistcoats, 345; makes experiments on the currency, 346; his intolerable despotism and suspicion, 348; recalls the Russian expedition from Persia, 350; forms an alliance with England and Austria for the purpose of acting against the republican government of France, 351; announces that he is ready, with all the resources of his empire, to assist in restoring the old relations among the European states, and to arrest the progress of democratic principles, 352; causes himself to be elected grand-master of the Knights of St. John of Malta, *ib.*; restores Suwarrow to his command, 353; sends the Russian troops into Italy to act against the French, *ib.*; his troops gain successes in Italy, but are defeated by the French in Switzerland, 360; is incensed against England, 364; withdraws from the coalition against France, 365; writes a friendly letter to Napoleon, 366; quarrels with England respecting the island of Malta, and seizes all the British vessels in the Russian harbours, *ib.*; restores the maritime convention against England, *ib.*; the extravagance of his behaviour leads to a supposition that he is mad, 368; conspiracy against him, 369; his assassination, 371; his character, 373; his plan of invading British India with an allied French and Russian army, 376.
- Persia, an expedition to, undertaken by Peter the Great, 194; cedes certain provinces to Peter, 195; the latter are restored by the empress Anna, who



- enters into a defensive treaty with the shah, 213; Catherine II. sends an expedition against, 331; engages in a long and unsuccessful war with Russia, 416; the emperor Nicholas wages a successful war against, 476; the Russian ambassador to, assassinated at Teheran, 480.
- Petchenegans, the, besiege Kief, 14; are driven by a stratagem to retire, 15; defeated by Sviatoslaf, *ib.*; make incursions into Russia, 21.
- Peter the Great, remarkable escape from being murdered by the Strelitz during his infancy, 128; is crowned conjointly with his half-brother Ivan, *ib.*; his education is purposely neglected, 129; unsuccessful war, during his minority, with the Tartars of the Crimea, 130; his half-sister Sophia endeavours to deprave his mind by surrounding him with profligate companions, *ib.*; his military taste in boyhood, *ib.*; his profitable association with Lefort, *ib.*; his early marriage, 131; the Princess Sophia engages a body of Strelitz to seize or murder him, *ib.*; he compels her to enter a convent, 132; his half-brother Ivan resigns all power into his hands, *ib.*; undertakes to reform the government of the country, and the manners of the people, 133; resolves to create a navy and seaports for Russia, *ib.*; rebuilds an English sailing-boat which he finds rotting in the grounds of his summer palace, 134; visits Archangel, and causes vessels to be built there, *ib.*; declares war against the Turks, *ib.*; he takes the fortress of Azoff, 135; he makes a triumphal entry into Moscow, after the manner of the ancient Romans, *ib.*; conspiracy of the Strelitz to murder him, which is defeated by his courage and self-possession, 137; his ferocious revenge on the traitors, 138; travels, that he may learn the arts of other countries, *ib.*; works at Amsterdam as a ship's carpenter, 139; proceeds to England, where he is hospitably received by William III., and inspects the dockyards at Deptford, Woolwich, and Chatham, 140; returns to Holland, and visits Vienna, 141; receives information that the Strelitz were again in rebellion, and returns to Russia, *ib.*; he punishes the rebels with a terrible ferocity, disbands the order, and raises new regiments on the European model, 142; he forces on Russia the civilisation she strives to reject, 143; compels the Russians to shave, and to abandon wearing the long Asiatic robe, *ib.*; establishes a perfect toleration for all denominations of Christians, Jesuits excepted, 144; assimilates the calendar to that of modern Europe, 145; introduces new social customs among the people, *ib.*; establishes an observatory, a theatre, almshouses, and hospitals at Moscow, 146; enters into an unprovoked league with the king of Denmark and Poland to dismember Sweden, *ib.*; he leads an army into Ingria, and lays siege to Narva, before which his troops are defeated with disgrace by Charles XII., 147; he returns to Moscow to raise and drill fresh troops, 148; defeats the Swedes near Dorpt, 149; becomes attached to a Livonian peasant-girl, named Martha, to whom he gives the name of Catherine, and makes his mistress, 150; takes the town of Rotteburg, and changes its name to Schlüsselburg, *ib.*; resolves to build a new capital of his empire on the banks of the Neva, and commence the erection of St. Petersburg, 151; terrible loss of life in laying the foundations of the new city, 152; captures Narva, 153; is defeated by the Swedes in Courland, and also at Frauenstadt, 155; he interposes on behalf of General Patkul, 156; is driven out of Grodno by Charles XII., and pursued into Russia, 158; encounters the Swedish general Lewenhaupt, 160; defeats Charles at the decisive battle of Pultowa, 162; by a new treaty with Poland, Denmark, and Prussia, he obtains a title to Livonia, Ingria, and a part of Finland, 164; makes a triumphal entry into Moscow, *ib.*; insists on satisfaction from England in consequence of the arrest of his ambassador at London for debt, *ib.*; publicly acknowledges his marriage with Catherine, 165; proceeds on an expedition to Turkey, 166; is hemmed-in by the Turks and the Tartars on the banks of the Pruth, *ib.*; despairs of his escape, but is persuaded by Catherine to try the effect of negotiation, 167; is allowed by the Turks to retire on certain conditions, 168; his uneasiness on account of his son Alexis, *ib.*; publicly marries the czarina Catherine, *ib.*; enters into a new league against Sweden, 169; his conquests in the Gulf of Finland, 170; institutes the order of St. Catherine in honour of the czarina, *ib.*; undertakes a second journey through the principal cities of Europe, 172; visits Copenhagen, Amsterdam, and Paris, 173; the doctors of the Sorbonne endeavour to induce him to recognise the spiritual authority of the pope, 174; proceeds to Berlin, 176; addresses a letter of warning to his son Alexis, 178; commands his son to meet him at Copenhagen, when the latter proceeds to Vienna and throws himself on the protection of the emperor, 179; induces Alexis, by a promise of pardon, to return to Moscow, where he causes him to be arrested, *ib.*; pronounces a sentence of deposition against his son, 180; causes Alexis to be placed on his trial for high treason, 184; is supposed to have caused his son to be privately put to death, 186; his improvements of the empire, 189; enters into a conspiracy with Charles XII. and Cardinal Alberoni to establish the sway of absolutism in Europe, *ib.*; his grief at the death of Charles XII., 190; the senate confer on him the titles of Great, Emperor, and Father of his country, 191; abolishes the office of patriarch, and compels numbers of monks and nuns to employ themselves in secular labours, 192; undertakes an expedition to Persia, 194; takes Derbend, but is compelled to return to Moscow, 195; acquires several Persian provinces by treaty, *ib.*; causes Catherine to be crowned empress, 196; his supposed suspicions of her infidelity, *ib.*; his severe sufferings from strangury, 197; he takes cold while rescuing a small vessel which was stranded on a shoal, 198; his death, *ib.*; his supposed will, 199; estimate of his character, 200.
- Peter Alexiévitch succeeds to the throne on the death of Catherine I., 208; is placed under guardianship during his minority, *ib.*; he is lured into an engagement with the daughter of Mentschikoff, but takes a dislike to the lady, 209; his premature death, 210.
- Peter, Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, afterwards the emperor Peter III., is summoned to Russia by the empress Elizabeth, who announces her intention of making him her successor, 224; his dissipated habits, 227; is married to the Princess Sophia Augusta Von Anhalt, who takes the name of Catherine, 228; his neglect of her, *ib.*; in consequence of her misconduct he talks of repudiating her when he comes to the throne, 230; becomes emperor, 235; concludes an armistice and subsequent peace with Prussia, 236; sends Russian



- troops to his assistance, 237; his reforms, 238; recalls Marshal Munich from Siberia, *ib.*; his ill-treatment of the empress Catherine, *ib.*; he attacks the clergy, and introduces violent reforms into the church, 239; promises to marry his mistress the Countess Vorontzoff, and place her on the throne instead of Catherine, 240; visits the de-throned Ivan at Schlüsselburg, *ib.*; a conspiracy is formed to depose him in favour of his wife Catherine, 241; on the breaking out of the conspiracy he proceeds to Cronstadt, 246; is refused admission, returns, and writes a submissive letter to Catherine, 247; is insulted and imprisoned, 248; signs his abdication, *ib.*; is removed to the castle of Ropscha, 249; reaction in his favour, 250; he is murdered, 251; his funeral and character, 252; his body is exhumed and buried with that of the empress Catherine, 336.
- Petropaulovski, unsuccessful attack upon, by an allied English and French squadron, 530.
- Poland, Russia places Frederic Augustus on the throne of, against the wishes of the people, 213; the empress Catherine gives the throne of to her discarded lover Count Poniatowski, 261; aggressive interference of the empress Catherine with the affairs of, 267; fierce dissensions in, between the catholics and the dissidents, 268; First partition of, 288; reflections on this event, 289; Catherine declares war against, 327; second partition of, *ib.*; revolution in under Kosciusko, 328; third division of, 329; the emperor Alexander establishes a constitution for, 461; Nicholas crowned king of, 483; oppressive government of the Grand-duke Constantine in, 484; outbreak of the insurrection of, 486; issues a manifesto to Europe, 448; the Diet of, pronounce a sentence of dethronement against Nicholas as king of Poland, 490; organisation of a national government for, *ib.*; fights the battles of Grochow and of Praga, 491; submits unconditionally to Nicholas, 495; is declared an integral part of the Russian empire, 496; reflections on this event, 497.
- Poles, the, endeavour to place a prince of their nation on the throne of Russia, 110; invade Russia, but consent to an armistice, and withdraw their troops, 113; again invade Russia, and sell a peace to the czar, 114.
- Potemkin becomes the "favourite" of the empress, 297; his ability and waywardness, 298; Catherine discards him as her lover, but retains him as a minister, 299; proposes to the empress to subdue the Crimea, 305; receives honours at St. Petersburg after the taking of Ismail by Suwarow, 321; his extravagance and eccentricities, 322; gives an extraordinary entertainment to the empress, 323; his death and character, 326.
- Prussia takes part with Russia and Austria in the first division of Poland, 288; Frederic of, recommends to Catherine II. to divide the rest of Poland, 300; assists in the second partition of Poland, 327; also in the third, 329; duplicity of, 388; accepts the electorate of Hanover from Napoleon, 394; demands that the French troops should evacuate the German territory, 395; the power of, is crushed by Napoleon on the battle-fields of Auerstadt and Jena, *ib.*; is dismembered and curtailed by the peace of Tilsit, 409; deserts Napoleon, and enters into an alliance with Russia, 452; its troops enter Paris, 456; her former territories are restored to her at the congress of Vienna, 458; favours the emperor Nicholas in his efforts to crush the Polish insurrection, 488; aids in the suppression of the little republic of Cracow, 515; enters into a convention with France and England, by which it sanctions the war against Russia, 526.
- Pugatschef assumes to be Peter III., and becomes the leader of a serious insurrection, 293; his successes, 294; is ruined, betrayed, and seized, 295; is executed, 296.
- Pultowa, the decisive battle of, between Charles XII. and the czar Peter, 162; the field of, is visited by Catherine II., 314.
- Raglan, Lord, appointed to the command of the British army in the East, 527.
- Romanoff, Michael, account of, 111; is elected czar, 112; he takes an oath limiting the royal authority, *ib.*; conducts an unsuccessful war against Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, *ib.*; the Poles invade Russia, but consent to an armistice, and withdraw, 113; associates his father in the government, *ib.*; buys a peace from the Poles, 114; his character and death, *ib.*
- Ruric assists the citizens of Novgorod against their enemies, 5; builds the town of Ladoga, *ib.*; subdues Novgorod, assumes the title of grand-prince, and establishes the foundation of the Russian empire, 6; the inhabitants of Kief desire him to name a member of his family as their prince, 7; his death, *ib.*; extinction of the dynasty of, 86.
- Russalki, description of, 4.
- Russia divided among the three sons of Sviatoslaf, 17; miserable condition in consequence of the dissensions and weakness of its princes, 27; falls into anarchy, and ceases to exist as an empire, 33; is invaded by the Tartars and Moguls, 34; is made subject to the Golden Horde, 37; opens a trade with England from the port of Archangel, 70; three years' terrible famine in, 89; a prey to anarchy and servile war, 109; an interregnum exists in, *ib.*; a national council elects Michael Romanoff as czar, 111; her want of outlets to the sea, 133; struggles against the civilisation forced on her by Peter the Great, 143; enters into a league against, and invades Sweden, 147; invades Turkey, but is repulsed with disaster, 166; enters into a new league against Sweden, 169; undertakes an unsuccessful expedition against Persia, 194; takes part in the seven years' war against Frederic II. of Prussia, 225; again invades Prussia, but receives a severe check from Frederic, 231; in conjunction with Austria, she inflicts a great blow on Frederic, 232; makes peace with Prussia, 236; interferes aggressively in the affairs of Poland, 261—267; effects the first division of Poland, 288; enjoys internal repose, 301; again engages in war with Turkey, 315; and with Sweden, 316; makes peace with Sweden at Varena, 319; makes peace with Turkey at Jassy, 325; declares war against Poland, 327; enters into an alliance with England and Austria, with the object of acting against the republican government of France, 351; pours its troops into Italy, to act against the French, 353; is defeated by Napoleon at Austerlitz, 391; checks Napoleon at Pultusk, 397; and at Eylau, 398; suffers a severe defeat at Friedland, 403; makes peace with France at Tilsit, 408; engages in a war with Turkey, 413; concludes an armistice with that power, 415; entertains an aversion to the alliance with France, 417; renews the war with Turkey, but concludes peace at Bucharest, 430; national and loyal feeling of the people of, on hearing of the projected invasion of their country by Napo-



- leon, 434; is entered by the French army, 436; the troops of, retreat before the French, 438; enters into an alliance with England, 439; fights the great battle of Borodino, 441; the French commence their retreat from, 447; recommences war with Turkey, 479; the troops of, pass the Balkans, 480; concludes the treaty of Adrianople, 481; assists the sultan against his rebellious vassal, Mehemet Ali, 501; induces the sultan to sign the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, *ib.*; her policy with respect to the Caucasus, 508; seizes an English merchantman, which endeavours to evade the blockade of the Circassian coast, *ib.*; declares war against the Circassians, *ib.*; failure of its military proceedings against, 509; aids in the suppression of the little republic of Cracow, 515; assumes a dictatorial attitude towards Switzerland, *ib.*; rescues Austria in the war of liberation with Hungary, 518; demands a protective power over all the Greek Christians in the Ottoman empire, 522; its troops enter the Danubian principalities, 523; are withdrawn from them, 531; are defeated at the Alma, 532; repulsed at Inkermann, 537.
- Russians, conjectural origin of the name, 4; their offensive manners at table during the time of Peter the Great, 202; their intolerance, 498.
- Sardinia joins England and France in the war against Russia, 541.
- Schamyl, account of, 509; his energetic guerilla warfare against the Russians in the Caucasus, *ib.*
- Schnisky conspires against the czar Dmitri, 100; is condemned to death, but pardoned, *ib.*; renews his treachery, 101; conducts the insurrection, during which Dmitri is murdered, 102; is proclaimed czar, 104; rebellion against him, 106; is deposed, and dies in prison, 109.
- Seythians, obscurity of, 1.
- Sebastopol, commencement of the siege of, 534; failure of the first bombardment of, *ib.*; sufferings of the allied troops before, 536.
- Serfdom, institution of, by Boris Godunof, 85.
- Seven Years' War, its cause, 225; its conclusion, 261.
- Siberia, its discovery and annexation to Russia, 69.
- Simeon, eventless reign of, 44.
- Sinope, destruction of a Turkish fleet in the harbour of, 525.
- Slave, or Slavi, signification of the name, 2.
- Slavonians, their ancient character, 2; their religion, 3.
- Sophia, the Princess, excites the Strelitz to insurrection, 127; is appointed regent during the minority of Ivan and Peter, 128; the Strelitz turn their arms against her, 129; attempts to deprave the character of the young czar Peter, 130; she engages a body of Strelitz to seize or murder him, 131; she loses her influence, and is compelled to enter a convent, 132; the czar causes several of the rebel Strelitz to be hanged before her window, 142; she becomes a nun, and dies, *ib.*
- Stenka Radzin, insurrection of the Cossacks under, 121; he seizes Astracan, 122; is decoyed to Moscow, and put to death, *ib.*
- St. Petersburg, the erection of, commenced by Peter the Great, 151; great loss of life in forming its foundations, 152; threatened by a Swedish fleet, 154.
- Strelitz, or Janizaries of Russia, instituted by Ivan the Terrible, 69; insurrection of, 127; their atrocities, 128; they turn their arms against the Princess Sophia, 129; conspire against the czar Peter, 137; who punishes them with terrible severity, 138; they revolt during his absence from Russia, 141; 7,000 of them are executed, and the rest disbanded, 142.
- Suwarow is engaged at Kinburn against the Turks, 315; and at Otchakoff, 318; his eccentricities, 320; gains the battle of the Rymnik, *ib.*; takes Ismail by assault, 321; takes Prague, and enters Warsaw, 329; is dismissed from his command by the emperor Paul for a sarcasm on the military meddling of the latter, 342; is recalled, and appointed to the command of the allied Russian and Austrian troops in Italy, 353; his successes in Italy, 354; national honours are bestowed upon him, 357; experiences reverses in Switzerland, 362; is disgraced by the emperor, and dies, 363.
- Sviatopolk murders three of his brothers, 22; is driven into Poland, *ib.*; is reseatd on his throne by Boleslas. Duke of Poland, 23; is defeated, and dies miserably, *ib.*
- Sviatopolk, son of Isiaslaf, becomes grand-prince, 28; weakness of his character, and barrenness of his reign, *ib.*; he dies, leaving the Russian empire in a state of great disorder, *ib.*
- Sviatoslaf ascends the throne of Kief, 14; makes war against the Kozans, the Bulgarians, and the Petchenegans, *ib.*; transfers his residence from Kief to Yamboly, and divides his Russian territories between his three sons, 15; he subdues the Bulgarians, *ib.*; advances into the Greek empire, where he is defeated, 16; is slain by the Petchenegans, *ib.*
- Sweden contemplates an alliance with Russia for the promotion of absolutism in Europe, 189; on the death of Charles XII., enters into a friendly alliance with England, 190; makes peace with Russia, 191; declares war against Russia, 219; is driven to conclude a capitulation, and endeavours to conciliate the empress Elizabeth by offering the crown to her relative the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, 224; renews hostilities with Russia, but concludes peace in 1743, at Abo, 224; makes peace with Prussia, 237; offers its mediation between Russia and Turkey, 316; assumes a hostile attitude towards Russia, *ib.*; threatens St. Petersburg, *ib.*; its fleet engages that of Russia, 317; defeats the Russian fleet, 319; concludes peace with Russia at Varena, *ib.*; refuses to submit to the domination of Napoleon, 419; refuses to join in a league against England, 421; Russia takes Finland from, *ib.*; is driven, by the violence of Napoleon, into an alliance with Russia, 433.
- Tamerlane, the Tartar conqueror, account of, 48; he invades Russia, 49; he inflicts a heavy blow on the Golden Horde, which had disregarded his authority, *ib.*; he crushes an army of Lithuanians, and then directs his steps towards India, *ib.*
- Tartars, their first descent on Russia, 34; their subtlety, *ib.*; their ambassadors are murdered by the Russian princes, *ib.*; revenge of the, 35; they again ravage Russia, and commit frightful atrocities, *ib.*; they despise the Russians as cowards, 36; policy of the, 38; impose a tax on the Russian people, who resist the collection, 40; division among the, 41; they cause several Russian princes to be put to death, 42; decline of their power, 45; they sustain a severe defeat from the Russians under the grand-prince Dmitri, on the banks of the Don, 46; they ravage Russia up to the walls of Moscow, which they set on fire, 47; Russia invaded by them under Tamerlane, 49; those of



- Kasan and the Crimea ravage Russia as far as Moscow, 65; those of the Crimea again invade Russia, but are repulsed by Boris Godunof, 84.
- Turkey, the sultan of, threatens the czar Alexis, but is defied, 123; concludes an armistice with the czar Feodor, 124; loses Azoff, 135; is invaded by the czar Peter, who is hemmed in on the banks of the Pruth, and purchases his escape by the surrender of Azoff, 168; Russia and Austria make war on, 214; makes representations to the empress Catherine on behalf of Poland, 269; declares war against Catherine, 276; after a series of reverses concludes peace, 291; enters into a new treaty with Russia, 303; demands from the empress Catherine the restitution of the Crimea, 314; declares war against Russia, 315; makes peace with Russia at Jassy, 325; congratulates the emperor Napoleon on his assumption of the imperial dignity, 412; becomes engaged in a quarrel with Russia, the troops of which overrun Moldavia and Wallachia, 412; its fleet is defeated by that of Russia near Tenedos, 415; concludes an armistice with Russia, *ib.*; Russia renews the war with, 428; concludes peace with Russia at Bucharest, 430; rejects the interposition of England, France, and Russia on behalf of the Greeks, 477; destruction of its fleet at Navarino, *ib.*; enters on a war with Russia, 478; concludes the treaty of Adrianople, 481; its struggle with Mehemet Ali, 500; signs the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, 501; exhaustion of before the forces of Ibrahim Pasha, 502; Abdul-Medjid succeeds to the throne of, 503; is saved from dissolution by the armed intervention of England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, *ib.*; modifies the treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, 504; rejects a demand of the emperor Nicholas, that he should exercise a protective power over all the Greek Christians in the Ottoman empire, 522; declares war against Russia, 524.
- Varangians, account of the, 5.
- Vassili, son of Dmitri, succeeds to the grand-princedom, 48; purchases from the Golden Horde permission to assume his title, *ib.*; during his reign Russia is invaded by Tamerlane, the Tartar conqueror, 49; having offended the Golden Horde, he sues for pardon, *ib.*; his death, *ib.*
- Vassili the Blind ascends the throne of the grand-princedom, 50; is driven from it by his uncle Yury, but restored by the people, *ib.*; his caprice and wilfulness, *ib.*; vicissitudes to which he is subject, *ib.*; his death, 51.
- Vassili Ivanovitch ascends the throne, 64; silence of history concerning him, *ib.*; after severe reverses, he subdues the Tartars of Kasan, 65; his death, 66.
- Vladimir drives his brother Yaropolk from the throne, 18; his crafty wisdom, *ib.*; he erects a new statue to the pagan god Perune, 19; his licentiousness, *ib.*; he appoints a commission to inquire into the religion of surrounding nations, *ib.*; besieges the city of Kherson, 20; becomes a Christian, and is received into the Greek church, under the name of Basil, *ib.*; commands his subjects to adopt Christianity, 21; becomes an altered man, *ib.*; divides his dominions amongst his sons, *ib.*; he dies, 22.
- Vladimir Monomachus declines to accept the throne bequeathed him by his father in contravention of the law of succession, 28; is called to the throne by the people, but again refuses it, *ib.*; eventually accepts it to save his country from confusion, *ib.*; greatness of his character, *ib.*; his farewell precepts to his subjects, 29; his death, 30.
- Vladimir, the city of, burnt by the Tartars, 36.
- Vsevolod ascends the throne and reigns fifteen years, 26; silence of history respecting him, 27.
- White Sea, expedition to, and blockade of, 530.
- Yaropolk seizes the dominions of his brother, 17; is assassinated, 18.
- Yaroslav drives Sviatopolk out of Kief, 22; is defeated by the Poles, but, on the death of Sviatopolk, ascends the throne as grand-prince, 23; engages in many foreign wars, governs with justice, and constructs a code of laws for the Russians, *ib.*; gives the city of Novgorod to his son Vladimir, 24; partitions the whole of Russia amongst his sons, on condition that the younger ones should be subordinate to the eldest, 25; he dies, *ib.*
- Yaroslav becomes grand-prince on condition of acknowledging the Tartar khan as his superior sovereign, 38; his death, 39.
- Yury, Prince of Moscow, marries a Tartar princess, 41; he accuses his rival Michael, Prince of Twer, of having poisoned her, *ib.*; is assassinated, 42.
- Zingis Khan, *see* Ghengis.



# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

## DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

|  |      |
|--|------|
| PORTRAIT OF THE EMPEROR ALEXANDER II. ( <i>Frontispiece.</i> )   | PAGE |
| VIGNETTE.  |      |
| MAP OF RUSSIA ( <i>Introduction</i> )                            | i    |
| ——— RUSSIA IN ASIA   | 1    |
| ——— PART OF RUSSIA IN ASIA AND INDEPENDENT TARTARY               | 124  |
| PETER THE GREAT BEHEADING THE STRELITZ                           | 142  |
| BATTLE OF PULTOWA  | 162  |
| PORTRAIT OF VISCOUNT WHITWORTH                                   | 349  |
| ——— NAPOLEON I.  | 365  |
| ——— SIR GORE OUSELEY   | 380  |
| BATTLE OF EYLAU  | 398  |
| THE CASTLE OF EUROPE—ROUMELI HISSAR                              | 415  |
| ENTRANCE TO THE BOSPHORUS FROM THE BLACK SEA                     | 429  |
| BATTLE OF MOSCOW, OR BORODINO                                    | 441  |
| VIEW OF THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW                                      | 444  |
| ——— CHURCH OF BLAGENNOI, MOSCOW                                  | 448  |
| ——— SMOLENSKO CHURCH, ON THE VASILI OSTROFF, NEAR ST. PETERSBURG | 448  |
| PASSAGE OF THE BEREZYNA—RETREAT OF THE FRENCH ARMY FROM MOSCOW   | 450  |
| THE REMNANT OF THE FRENCH "GRAND ARMY" ENTERING PARIS            | 450  |
| ENTRY OF THE ALLIES INTO PARIS                                   | 460  |
| PASS IN THE BALKAN MOUNTAINS—BULGARIAN SIDE                      | 480  |
| DITTO                      DITTO                      BY HAIDHOS | 480  |
| VIEW OF ADRIANOPLE   | 481  |
| PORTRAIT OF LORD ABERDEEN  | 482  |
| VIEW OF UNKIAR-SKELESSI, WITH ENCAMPMENT OF RUSSIANS             | 501  |
| BOMBARDMENT OF ST. JEAN D'ACRE                                   | 503  |
| ATTACK ON SIDON  | 503  |
| PORTRAIT OF THE GRAND-DUKE CONSTANTINE                           | 534  |
| ——— GENERAL TODTLEBEN  | 534  |
| CORONATION OF ALEXANDER II.                                      | 546  |
| PORTRAIT OF THE EARL OF DURHAM                                   | 546  |
| ——— COUNT ORLOFF   | 550  |
| ——— GENERAL MOURAVIEFF   | 550  |





"Flash'd all their sabres bare, Flash'd as they turn'd in air, Sabring the gunners there, Charging an Army, while All the world wonder'd!"  
SOUVENIR OF THE BALAKLAVA CHARGE.



of the rider back till he had passed the interval that separated the 13th Light Dragoons from the foremost troops, then it fell from the saddle; and all the rest was the unswerving following of an order which has been the cause of much disputing.

The regiments which went steadily, unflinchingly down that valley were the 13th Light Dragoons, commanded by Captain Oldham, and the 17th Lancers, commanded by Captain Morris, in the first line, the 11th Hussars, commanded by Colonel Douglas, following in support. The third line was composed of the 4th Light Dragoon, under Lord George Paget, and the main portion of the 8th Hussars, under Colonel Shewell.

We cannot tell the story again in this column. How the muster that afterwards took place on the slopes of Balaklava, with stragglers and riderless horses coming in—the roll-call began; how that force, which numbered 673 men when it went into action, had been reduced to a mounted strength of 195; how, from a later examination, that it was found, in officers and men killed and wounded (the wounded, or those who fell beneath their dead horses, having in many instances been murdered by the Cossacks in the valley), the brigade had lost 247—that is to say, 113 killed and 134 wounded, the mounted strength being so low as 195 because of the great slaughter of the horses. There is to be another muster on Monday, twenty-one years after, and death has probably been busy since that October day, when these men looked into each other's grimed and bloody faces to see which of their comrades had come out alive.

Yes, it will be a serious, if not a sad, celebration—but it will be vastly suggestive in many ways—and all England may well feel interested in the account of such a meeting and sincere in wishing to convey to the men who will assemble there the expressions of respect and admiration that brave deeds deserve.

Home News.

tunity will be omitted that may present itself in the course of his travels to give encouragement to those earnest men thus working in so great a cause. However rapid or slow may be their progress, from causes which have been so long at work, his Royal Highness is satisfied that their honest endeavours, with truth for their guide, must prevail at last. His Royal Highness thanks your Grace for furnishing him with a list of those places where he will find fresh evidences of successful missionary exertions. In conclusion, his Royal Highness desires me to add his grateful acknowledgments for the prayers of the society for his safety and health during his absence from England.—I have the honour to be, my Lord Archbishop, your Grace's most obedient servant, W. KNOLLYS, General, Controller of his Royal Highness's household."

#### A SHAM FIGHT.

took place last Monday on Wimbledon-common between about 2000 of the household troops. The men marched down by road through Putney. Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar commanded the attacking party, consisting of two regiments of cavalry numbering from 1200 to 1400 men. The defending force was under Colonel Fletcher, and numbered 500 foot. The attacking party is said to have had the best of the engagement.

#### MR. DISRAELI.

took part in the business of the Bucks Quarter Sessions at Aylesbury on Monday, when Lord Cottesloe, now Lord Lieutenant of the county, in the place of the Duke of Buckingham, was appointed to the chairmanship of the Court of Quarter Sessions.

#### MR. GLADSTONE AND PUBLIC RUMOUR.

The *Glasgow Herald* has been favoured with the following extract from a letter from Mr. Gladstone to a friend in Glasgow:—

"There is not a word of truth in the statements—1. That I have received a proposal from Turkey in respect to its finances. 2. That I have made any declaration on the subject of the political future, other than was announced to the world eighteen months ago. 3. That I have written about the Church of England in the new *Church Quarterly Review*, or elsewhere. I have written an article in that review respecting the Church and State question in Italy, which contains some (I think) interesting information on the subject of patronage and popular election of clergy."

did their duty, before five years not merely the destinies of Ireland, but of the British Empire, would be in the hands of the Home-Rule party in the House of Commons.

#### MR. W. J. INGRAM, M.P.

speaking at a Liberal gathering at Boston last Monday night, reviewed the work of the last Session of Parliament, and criticised the attitude of the Government towards Mr. Pimms and his work, as well as the measure regulating purchase in the Army. Mr. PARRY, Mr. HOLMES, M.P. for Hackney, and Mr. BYRON WEBBER also addressed the meeting.

#### SHIPPING CASUALTIES.

The smack *Artery*, belonging to Mr. G. H. Hawes, of Yarmouth, has been lost, with all hands, six or seven in number. The smack *Vixen* put into Yarmouth last week, with the loss of three hands—Alfred Hackett, Jacob Brown, and Hubbard—all of whom leave widows and children. They were ferrying to the steamer, and in returning to the smack a heavy sea struck the boat and capsized it, and the three men were swept away and drowned. The smack *Water-Witch* has also put into Yarmouth, with the loss of one man. The Merchant, 115 tons, was lost in Hattlepole Bay during the gale on Thursday se'night. She was laden with coals and iron for Brightlingsea. All hands were lost. A foreign ship, timber-laden, was lost at Orkney, on the east coast of Aberdeenshire, on the 15th. The vessel was the brig *Johann Cornelius*, Captain Fradlands, of Rosstock. The crew took to their long-boat, and were within a few yards of the shore, when all were drowned except the captain, who had on a life-belt. The captain and six men have lost their lives by the wreck of the *Galway Lass*, off Flamborough Head. The brig belonged to Mr. Robert Hillman, of Lewes. The barque *Teazer*, of Jamaica, Storm master, went ashore, on Monday, at Whitby. Her crew of nine men has fortunately been saved by the Robert Whitworth life-boat, presented to the National Life-Boat Institution by its Manchester branch. A large schooner was seen, on Monday afternoon, in St. Andrew's Bay in distress. About three o'clock she drifted towards the mouth of the Tay and went ashore on the Banks. The sea was making a clean breach over her, and great fears were entertained for the crew—who were saved, however, by the life-boat. The ship proved to be the *Leopold*, of Riga.



...ards Co.  
s of the Coe  
isoner for  
—and whilst  
ad an act  
d he manager  
a horse w  
mounting it



M238120

DK4D  
T9  
Case B

★

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY  
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.  
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>6 Jan '51 BC</p> <p>MAR 5 1969 94</p> <p>RECEIVED</p> <p>FEB 19 '69 - 11 AM</p> <p>LOAN DEPT.</p> |  |  |
|--|--|--|

LD 21-100m-11,'49 (B7146s16) 476



